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# BODY OF DIVINITY:

WHEREIN THE

## DOCTRINES

OF THE

## CHRISTIAN RELIGION

ARE EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

BEING THE

*SUBSTANCE OF SEVERAL LECTURES*

ON

THE ASSEMBLY'S LARGER CATECHISM.

BY THOMAS RIDGLEY, D. D.

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*WITH NOTES, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED,*

BY JAMES P. WILSON, D. D.

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IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE  
**DOCTRINES**  
OF THE  
*CHRISTIAN RELIGION*  
EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.

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THE WORK OF CREATION.

QUEST. XIV. *How doth God execute his decrees ?*

ANSW. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

QUEST. XV. *What is the work of creation ?*

ANSW. The work of creation is that, wherein God did, in the beginning, by the word of his power, make, of nothing, the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

**H**AVING considered God's eternal purpose, as respecting whatever shall come to pass, which is generally called an internal, or immanent act of the divine will, we are now to consider those works which are produced by him, in pursuance thereof. It is inconsistent with the idea of an infinitely perfect Being, to suppose, that any of his decrees shall not take effect, *Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?* Num. xxiii. 19. *His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure,* Isa. xlvi. 10. This is a necessary consequence, from the immutability of his will, as well as from the end which he has designed to attain, to wit, the advancement of his own glory ; and therefore, if he should not execute his decrees, he would lose that revenue of glory, which he designed to bring to himself thereby, which it cannot be supposed that he would do ; and accordingly we are to consider his power as exerted, in order to the accomplishment of his purpose. This is said to have been done either in the first production of all things, which is called, *The work of creation*, or in his upholding and governing all things,

which is his *providence* ; both which are to be particularly considered. And,

I. We are to speak concerning the work of creation, and so to enquire what we are to understand by *creation*, and to consider it as a work peculiar to God.

II. That this work was not performed from eternity, but in the beginning of time.

III. How he is said to create all things by the word of his power.

IV. The end for which he made them, namely, for himself, or for his own glory.

V. The time in which he made them. And,

VI. The quality or condition thereof, as all things are said to have been made very good.

I. As to the meaning of the word *creation* ; it is the application thereof to the things made, or some circumstances attending this action, that determine the sense of it. The Hebrew and Greek words \*, by which it is expressed, are sometimes used to signify the natural production of things : Thus it is said, in Psal. cii. 18. *The people that shall be created*, speaking of the generation to come, *shall praise the Lord* ; and elsewhere, in Ezek. xxi. 30. says God, *I will judge thee in the place where thou wast created*, that is, where thou wast born, in the land of thy nativity. And sometimes it is applied to signify the dispensations of providence, which, though they are the wonderful effects of divine power, yet are taken in a sense different from the first production of all things : thus it is said, in Isa. xlv. 7. *I form the light, and create darkness* ; which metaphorical expressions are explained in the following words, *I make peace, and create evil*.

And, on the other hand, sometimes God's creating is expressed by his *making all things* ; which word, in its common acceptation, is taken for the natural production of things ; though, in this instance, it is used for the production of things which are supernatural : thus it is said, in John i. 3. *All things were made by him* ; and elsewhere, in Psal. xxxiii. 6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all by the host of them by the breath of his mouth*. Therefore it is by the application of these words, to the things produced, that we are more especially to judge of the sense of them. Accordingly, when God is said to create, or make the heavens and earth, or to bring things into being, which before did not exist, this is the most proper sense of the word creation ; and in this sense we take it, in the head we are entering upon. It is the production of all things out of nothing, by his almighty word ; and this is generally called im-

\* ברא, עשה, יצר, יבצר, יבשר, יבשר, יבשר, יבשר

mediate creation, which was the first display of divine power, a work with which time began ; so we are to understand those words, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, Gen. i. 1. that is, that first matter out of which all things were formed, which has been neither increased nor diminished ever since, nor can be, whatever alterations there may be made in things, without supposing an act of the divine will to annihilate any part thereof, which we have no ground to do.

Again, it is sometimes taken for God's bringing things into that form, in which they are, which is generally called a mediate creation, as in the account we have of it in the first chapter of Genesis ; in which God is said, out of that matter which he created at first, to create the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all living creatures that move therein, after their respective kinds, which no finite wisdom, or power, could have done. The work was supernatural, and so differs from the natural production of things by creatures, inasmuch as they can produce nothing, but out of other things, that have in themselves a tendency, according to the fixed laws of nature, to be made, that which is designed to be produced out of them ; as when a plant, or a tree, is produced out of a seed, or when the form, or shape of things is altered by the skill of men, where there is a tendency in the things themselves, in a natural way, to answer the end designed by them that made them, in which respect they are said to make, but not create those things ; so that creation is a work peculiar to God, from which all creatures are excluded. Accordingly, it is a glory which God often appropriates to himself in scripture : thus he is called, by way of eminence, *The Creator of the ends of the earth*, Isa. xl. 28. and he speaks, concerning himself, with an unparalleled magnificence of expression, *I have made the earth, and created man upon it ; I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded*, Isa. xlv. 12. and he is said to have done this, exclusively of all others : thus he says, *I am the Lord, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself*, Isa. xlv. 24. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, since it is a work of infinite power, and therefore too great for any finite being, who can act no otherwise, but in proportion to the circumscribed limits of its own power ; and being, at best, but a natural agent, it cannot produce any thing supernatural. From whence it may be inferred, that no creature was an instrument made use of, by God, in the production of all things ; or that infinite power could not be exerted by a finite medium : but this has been already considered, under a foregoing answer.

II. We are now to consider that this work of creation was not performed from eternity, but in the beginning of time. This



we assert against some of the heathen philosophers, who have, in their writings, defended the eternity of the world \*, being induced hereunto by those low conceptions, which they had of the power of God, as supposing, that because all creatures, or natural agents, must have some materials to work upon, so that as this proposition is true, with respect to them, that nothing can be made out of nothing, they conclude, that it is also applicable to God. And this absurd opinion has been imbibed by some, who have pretended to the Christian name; it was maintained by Hermogenes, about the middle of the second century, and, with a great deal of spirit and argument, opposed by Tertullian; and, among other things, that father observes, that philosophy, in some respects, had paved the way to heresy †; and probably the apostle Paul was apprehensive that it would do so; or that they, who were bred up in the schools of the philosophers, would, as it is plain they often did, adapt their notions in divinity, to those which they had before learned therein, of which this is a flagrant instance; and therefore he says, *Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ*, Col. ii. 8. and they, who have defended this notion, have been divided in their sentiments about it. Some suppose, in general, that matter was eternal, but not brought into that form, in which it now is, till God, by his almighty power, produced that change in it, and so altered the form of things. Others suppose, that the world was in a form, not much unlike to what it now is, from eternity, and that there were eternal successive ages, and generations of men, and a constant alteration of things. Some parts of the world, at one time, destroyed by deluges, or fire, or earthquakes, and other parts at another time; and so there was a kind of succession of generation and corruption; former worlds lost and buried in ruins, and all the monuments of their antiquity perished with them, and new ones arising in their stead. This they assert, as a blind to their ungrounded opinion, and as an answer to that reasonable demand which might be made; If the world was eternal, how comes it to pass that we know nothing of what was done in it, in those ages, which went before that which we reckon the first beginning of time?

As for the school-men, though they have not any of them given directly into this notion, which is so notoriously contrary

\* Of this opinion was Aristotle, and his followers; though he acknowledges, that it was contrary to the sentiments of all the philosophers that were before him, *Vid. Arist. de Cælo, Lib. I. cap. 2.* who, speaking concerning the creation of the world, says, *ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ κόσμου οὐκ ἦν ἀπείρονος ἀλλὰ ἐκείνη*.

† Tertull. adv. Hermog. cap. 8. *Hereticorum Patriarchæ Philosophi*; which was so memorable a passage, that it was quoted, upon the same occasion, by Jerom, and others of the fathers.



to scripture, yet some of them have very much confounded and puzzled the minds of men with their metaphysical subtilties about this matter ; as some of them have pretended to maintain, that, though God did not actually create any thing before that beginning of time, which is mentioned in scripture, yet he might, had he pleased, have produced things from eternity \*, because he had, from eternity, infinite power, and a sovereign will ; therefore this power might have been deduced into act, and so there might have been an eternal production of things ; for to suppose, that infinite power cannot exert itself, is contrary to the idea of its being infinite. And to suppose that God was infinitely good, from eternity, implies, that he might have communicated being to creatures from eternity, in which his goodness would have exerted itself. And they farther argue, that it is certain, that God might have created the world sooner than he did ; so that, instead of its having continued in being, that number of years, which it has done, it might have existed any other unlimited number of years ; or since, by an act of his will, it has existed so many thousand years, as it appears to have done, from scripture, it might, had he pleased, have existed any other number of years, though we suppose it never so large, and consequently that it might have existed from eternity. But what is this, but to darken truth, by words without knowledge ? or to measure the perfections of God, by the line or standard of finite things ? it is to conceive of the eternity of God, as though it were successive. Therefore, though we do not deny but that God could have created the world any number of years that a finite mind can describe, sooner than he did ; yet this would not be to create it from eternity, since that exceeds all bounds. We do not deny but that the divine power might have been deduced into an act, or created the world before he did ; yet to say that he could create it from eternity, is contrary to the nature of things ; for it is to suppose, that an infinite duration might be communicated to a finite being, or that God might make a creature equal, in duration, with himself ; which, as it contains the greatest absurdity, so the impossibility of the thing does not, in the least, argue any defect of power in him.

From whence we may infer, the vanity, and bold presumption, of measuring the power of God by the line of the creature ; and the great advantage which we receive from divine revelation, which sets this matter in a clear light, by which it appears, that nothing existed before time but God ; this is agreeable to the highest reason, and the divine perfections. To suppose, that a creature existed from eternity, implies a contradiction ; for to be a creature, is to be produced by the power of a creator, who is God, and this is inconsistent with its ex-

\* This was maintained by Aquinas, Durandus, Cajetan, and others ; though opposed by Albertus Magnus, Bonaventure, &c.

isting from eternity ; for that is to suppose that it had a being before it was brought into being.

Moreover, since to exist from eternity, is to have an infinite, or unlimited duration, it will follow from thence, that if the first matter, out of which all things were formed, was infinite in its duration, it must have all other perfections ; particularly, it must be self-existent, and have in it nothing that is finite, for infinite and finite perfections are inconsistent with each other ; and, if so, then it must not consist of any parts, or be divisible, as all material things are : besides, if the world was eternal, it could not be measured by successive duration, inasmuch as there is no term, or point, from whence this succession may be computed, for that is inconsistent with eternity ; and if its duration was once unmeasured, or not computed by succession, how came it afterwards to be successive, as the duration of all material beings is ?

Again, to suppose matter to be co-eternal with God, is to suppose it to be equal with him, for whatever has one divine perfection, must have all ; so that this is contrary to those natural ideas, which we have of the divine perfections, and contains such absurdities, as have not the least colour of reason to support them.

But it more evidently appears, from scripture, that the world was made in the beginning of time, and therefore did not exist from eternity ; since therein we read, that *in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, Gen. i. 1. and elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands*, Heb. i. 10. Now since we are not to confound time and eternity together, or to say, that that which was created in the beginning, was without beginning, that is, from eternity, it is evident that no creature was eternal.

Thus having considered the impossibility of the existence of finite things, from eternity, we may here take occasion to vindicate the account we have in scripture, concerning the world's having been created between five and six thousand years since, from the objections of those who suppose, that the antiquity thereof exceeds the scripture-account by many ages. Those that follow the LXX translation of the Old Testament, in their chronological account of time, suppose the world to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years older than we have ground to conclude it is, according to the account we have thereof in the Hebrew text. This we cannot but think to be a mistake, and has led many of the fathers into the same error \*, who,

\* Thus Augustin, speaking concerning the years from the time of the creation to his time, reckons them to be not full, that is, almost six thousand years ; whereas in reality, it was but about four thousand four hundred, herein being imposed on by this translation. Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XII. Cap. 10.

through their unacquaintedness with the Hebrew language, excepting Jerom and Origen, hardly used any but this translation \*.

But this we shall pass over, and proceed to consider the account that some give of the antiquity of the world, which is a great deal remote, from what we have in scripture, though this is principally to be found in the writings of those who were altogether unacquainted with it. Thus the Egyptians, according to the report of some ancient historians, pretended, that they had chronicles of the reigns of their kings for many thousand years longer than we have ground to conclude the world has stood †. And the Chaldeans exceed them in the accounts they give of some things contained in their history; and the Chinese pretend to exceed them by many thousand years, but these accounts are fabulous and ungrounded ‡ (a). And inasmuch as they are confuted, and exposed by many of the heathen themselves, as ridiculous and absurd boasts, rather than authentic accounts, no one

\* Every one, that observes the lxx. translation in their chronological account of the lives of the patriarchs, from Adam to Abraham, in Gen. chap. v. compared with chap. xi. will find, that there are so many years added therein to the account of the lives of several there mentioned, as will make the sum total, from the creation of the world to the call of Abraham, to be between fourteen and fifteen hundred years more than the account which we have thereof in the Hebrew text; which I rather choose to call a mistake, in that translation, than to attempt to defend it; though some, who have paid too great a deference to it, have thought that the Hebrew text was corrupted, after our Saviour's time, by the Jews by leaving out those years which the lxx. have added, designing hereby to make the world believe that the Messiah was not to come so soon as he did, by fourteen or fifteen hundred years; and that therefore the Hebrew text, in those places, is to be corrected by that version; which I cannot but conclude to be a very injurious insinuation, as well as not supported by any argument that has the least probability in it.

† Vid. Pomp. Mel. Lib. I. Cap. 9. who speaks of the annals of the kings of Egypt, as containing above thirteen thousand years; and others extend the antiquity of that nation many thousand years more. Vid. Diod. Sicul. Biblioth. Lib. I.

‡ Vid. Cicero de Divinat. Lib. I. who condemns the Egyptians and Babylonians, as foolish, vain, yea impudent, in their accounts relating to this matter, when they speak, as some of them do, of things done four hundred and seventy thousand years before; upon which occasion, Lactantius, in Lib. 7. § 14. de Vita beata, passes this just censure upon them, Quia se posse argui non putabant, liberum sibi crediderunt esse mentiri; and Macrobi. in somn. Scip. cap. 11. supposes that they did not measure their years as we do, by the annual revolution of the sun, but by the moon; and so a year, according to them, was no more than a month, which he supposes Virgil was apprised of, when he calls the common solar year, Annus Magnus, as compared with those short ones that were measured by the monthly revolution of the moon: but this will not bring the Egyptians and Chaldean accounts to a just number of years, but some of them would, notwithstanding, exceed the time that the world has stood. As for the Chinese, they have no authentic histories that give any account of this matter; but all depends upon uncertain tradition, transmitted to them by those who are their leaders in religious matters, and reported by travellers who have received these accounts from them, which, therefore, are far from deserving any credit in the world.

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(a) The reader will be highly gratified by a treatise of Dr. Hugh Williamson on climate, wherein he examines this subject.



who has the least degree of modesty, can oppose them to the account we have, in scripture, of the time that the world has continued, which is no more than between five or six thousand years.

And that the world cannot be of greater antiquity than this may be proved, from the account which we have of the first original of nations, and the inventors of things in scripture, and other writings. It is not reasonable to suppose, that men lived in the world many thousand years, without the knowledge of those things, that were necessary for the improvement of their minds, and others that were conducive to the good of human society, as well as subservient to the conveniencies of life; but this they must have done, who are supposed to have lived before these things were known in the world.

As to what concerns the original of nations, which spread themselves over the earth after the universal deluge, we have an account of it in Gen. x. and, in particular, of the first rise of the Assyrian monarchy, which was erected by Nimrod, who is supposed to be the same that other writers call Belus. This monarchy was continued, either under the name of the Assyrian, or Babylonian, till Cyrus's time, and no writers pretend that there was any before it: and, according to the scripture account hereof, it was erected above seventeen hundred years after the creation of the world; whereas, if the world had been so old, as some pretend it is, or had exceeded the scripture account of the age and duration thereof, we should certainly have had some relation of the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations, in those foregoing ages, to be depended on, but of this, history is altogether silent; for we suppose the account that the Egyptians give of their Dynasties, and the reigns of their gods and kings, in those foregoing ages, are, as was before observed, ungrounded and fabulous.

As to what respects the inventors of things, which are necessary in human life, we have some hints of this in scripture. As we have an account in scripture, Gen. iv. 20—22. of the first that made any considerable improvement in the art of husbandry, and in the management of cattle, and of the first *instructor of every artificer in brass and iron*, by which means those tools were framed, which are necessary for the making those things that are useful in life; and also of the first inventor of music, who is called, *The father of all such as handle the harp and organ*, which was in that space of time, which intervened between the creation and the deluge; and, after this we read of the first plantation of vineyards, and the farther improvement thereof by making wine, by Noah, Gen. ix. 20, 21. which the world seems to have known nothing of before. And it is more than probable, that the art of navigation was not known, till Noah, by divine direction, framed the ark, which gave the



first hint to this useful invention; and this art was not, for many ages, so much improved, as it is in our day. The mariner's needle, and the variation of the compass, or the method of sailing by observation of the heavenly bodies, seem to have been altogether unknown by those mariners, in whose ship the apostle Paul sailed, Acts xxvii. for want of which, they exposed themselves to suffer shipwreck, hoping, thereby, to save their lives.

And, as to what concerns those inventions, that are necessary for the improvement of knowledge; it does not appear that writing was known till Moses' time; and, after this, the use of letters was brought into Greece by Cadmus. And therefore it is no wonder, when historians give some dark hints of things done before this, being unacquainted with scripture-history, that they are at a loss, and pretend not to give an account of things done before the deluge \*. Shall we suppose, that there were so many ages, as some pretend in which men lived, and yet no account given of things done therein, transmitted to posterity, by those who assert it? Therefore there can be no ground to conclude, that the world has stood longer than the scripture account thereof †. We pass by the invention of the art of printing, which has not been known in the world above three hundred years; and the many improvements that have been made in philosophy, mathematicks, medicine, anatomy, chymistry, and mechanicks, in the last age; and can we suppose that there are so many thousand ages passed without any of these improvements? And to this we may add the origin

\* The common distribution of time, into that which is ἀπὸ τοῦ, before the flood, and μὲτὰ τοῦ, after it, till they computed by the Olympiads; and afterwards that which they call ἱστορίαν the only account to be depended upon, makes this matter further evident.

† See this argument further improved, by those who have insisted on the first inventors of things; as Polydor. Virgil. de Rerum inventoribus; and Plin. Secund. Hist. Mundi. Lib. VII. cap. 56.—60. and Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. I. Lucretius, though an assertor of the eternity of matter and motion, from his master Epicurus, yet proves, that the world, as to its present form, had a beginning; and what he says is so much to our present argument, that I cannot but mention it. Vid. Lucret de Rer. Nat. Lib. V.

*Prætera si nulla fuit genitalis origo  
Terrarum & Cæli, semperq; æterna fuere;  
Cursus supra bellum Thebæum, & funera Trojæ,  
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poetæ?  
Quo tot facta virum toties cecidere? neque usquam  
Æternis fumæ monumentis insita florent?  
Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem Summa, recensq;  
Natura est Mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit.  
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliantur.  
Nunc etiam augescunt; nunc addita navigis sunt  
Multæ: modo organici melicos peperere sonores  
Denique Natura hæc rerum, ratioque reperta est  
Nuper. —*

of idolatry, in them who worshipped men, whom they called gods, namely, such as had been useful while they lived among those that worshipped them, or had been of great note, or power, in the world, or who were the first inventors of things : this being known, and the time in which they lived, mentioned, by some writers among the heathen, which is much later than the first age of the world, is a farther evidence of this truth, that it has not stood so many years as some pretend.

If it be objected, that there has been a kind of circulation, or revolution of things with respect to men's knowing, and afterwards losing and then regaining the knowledge of some of those arts, which we suppose to have been first discovered in in later ages, so that they might have been known in the world many ages before :

This is to assert, without pretending to give any proof thereof ; and nothing can be inferred from a mere possibility of things, which no one, who has the least degree of judgment, will ever acquiesce in ; especially the memory of some things could never have been universally erased out of the minds of men, by any devastations that might be supposed to have been made in the world. Therefore, to conclude this argument, nothing can be reasonably objected against the account we have in scripture, of the creation of the world at first, and of its having continued that number of years, and no longer, which we believe it to have done, from those sacred writings, which contain the only authentic records thereof, and have sufficient authority to put to silence all those fabulous conjectures, or vain and groundless boasts, that pretend to contradict it.

III. God is said to have created all things by the word of his power ; thus the Psalmist says, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*, Psal. xxxiii. 6. Some, indeed, understand this, and several other scriptures, in which God is said to create all things by his word, as implying, that God the Father made all things by the Son, his personal Word : but, though this be a great truth, and it be expressly said, *All things were made by him*, John i. 3. as has been considered under a foregoing answer \*, whereby the divinity of Christ was proved ; yet here we speak of creation, as an effect of that power, which is a perfection of the divine nature. And whereas it is called *the word* of his power, it signifies, that God produced all things by an act of his power and sovereign will ; so that how difficult soever the work was in itself, as infinitely superior to finite power, yet it argues, that it was performed by God without any manner of difficulty, and therefore it was as easy to him as a thought, or an act of willing is to any creature ; accordingly it is said,

\* See Vol. I. Pages 220, 221.

*He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast,* Psal. xxxiii. 9. As nothing could resist his will, or hinder his purpose from taking effect, so all things were equally possible to him. In this respect, creation differs from the natural production of things, which, though they be the effects of power, yet nothing is produced by a powerful word, or, as it were, commanded into being, but that which is the effect of almighty power, as the creation of all things is said to be.

IV. The end for which God made all things, was his own glory; or, as it is said, *He made all things for himself,* Prov. xvi. 4. that is, that he might demonstrate his eternal power and Godhead, and all those divine perfections, which shine forth in this illustrious work, and so might receive a revenue of glory, as the result thereof. Not that he was under any natural necessity to do this, or would have been less happy and glorious in himself, than he was from all eternity, if he had not given being to any thing. We are far from supposing, that there is any addition made hereby to his essential glory; this appears from the independence of his divine perfections: As they are not derived from the creature, so they cannot receive any additional improvement from him, no more than the lustre of the sun is increased by its being beheld by our eyes; nor does it sustain any real diminution thereof, when its brightness is obscured by the interposure of any thing that hides it from us. God did not make the world that his power or wisdom might be improved hereby; but that he might be admired and adored, or that his relative glory might be advanced by us, which would be the highest advantage to us. This was the great end for which he made all things; and it is very agreeable to the scope and design of scripture in general, which puts us upon giving him the glory due to his name, as being induced hereunto by all the displays thereof in his works.

Therefore it is a very unbecoming way of speaking, and tends very much to detract from the divine perfections, to say as a judicious writer \* represents some objecting, "As though God were not so selfish, and desirous of glory, as to make the world, and all creatures therein, only for his own honour, and to be praised by men." And another writer † speaks his own sense of this matter, in words no less shocking. He says, indeed, "That God cannot really suffer any diminution of his own by our dislike, or is advanced in honour by our approbation of his dispensations;" which, as it respects his essential glory, is an undoubted truth; but yet he speaks, in other respects, of the glory of God, by which, it is plain, he means that which is generally called his relative, or manifestative glo-

\* See *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation*, page 182.

† *Whitby on Election*, page 92, 93.



ry, in a very unbecoming manner, when he says ; “ That God, “ being infinitely perfect, must be infinitely happy within him- “ self, and so can design no self-end without himself ; there- “ fore what other end can he be supposed to aim at in these “ things, but our good ? It is therefore a vain imagination, that “ the great design of any of God’s actions, his glorious works “ and dispensations, should be thus to be admired, or applauded, “ by his worthless creatures, that he may gain esteem, or “ a good word, from such vile creatures as we are. We take “ too much upon us, if we imagine that the all-wise God can “ be concerned, whether such blind creatures, as we are, ap- “ prove or disapprove of his proceedings ; and we think too “ meanly of, and detract from his great Majesty, if we con- “ ceive he can be delighted with our applause, or aim at re- “ putation from us in his glorious design, that therefore such “ as we should think well of him, or have due apprehensions “ of those attributes, by the acknowledgment of which we are “ said to glorify him.” This is, at once, to divest him of all that glory, which he designed from his works ; but far be it from us to approve of any such modes of speaking. Therefore we must conclude, that though God did not make any thing with a design to render himself more glorious than he was, from all eternity, yet it was, that his creatures should behold and improve the displays of his divine perfections, and so render himself the object of desire and delight, that religious worship might be excited hereby, and that we might ascribe to him the glory that is due to his name.

We might also observe, that God created all things by his power, that he might take occasion to set forth the glory of all his other perfections, in his works of providence and grace, and particularly in the work of our redemption, all which suppose the creature brought into being ; and so his first work made way for all others, which are, or shall be performed by him in time, or throughout the ages of eternity.

V. We are now to consider the space of time, in which God created all things, namely, in six days. This could not have been determined by the light of nature, and therefore must be concluded to be a doctrine of pure revelation ; as also the account we have, in Gen. i. of the order in which things were brought to perfection, or the work of each day. Here we cannot but take notice of the opinion of some, who suppose, that the world was created in an instant, as thinking, that this is more agreeable to the idea of creation, and more plainly distinguishes it from the natural production of things, which are brought to perfection by degrees, and not in a moment, as they suppose this work was. This opinion has been advanced by some ancient writers ; and whereas it seems directly to con-



tradict that account which is given thereof by Moses, they suppose that the distribution of the work of creation, into that of six days, is only designed to lead us into the knowledge of the distinct parts thereof, whereby they may be better conceived of, as though they had been made in such an order, one after another; but this is to make the scripture speak what men please to have it, without any regard had to the genuine sense and import of the words thereof. Had it only been asserted, that the first matter, out of which all things were formed, had been created in an instant; that is not only agreeable to the work of creation, but to the literal sense of the text; for it is said to be created *in the beginning*, that is, in the first point of time; or if it had only been said, that God could have brought all things to perfection in an instant, we would not have denied it; but to assert that he did so, we cannot but think an ill-grounded sense of a plain part of scripture. That which induces them to give into this opinion is, because they think that this redounds to the glory of God, and seems most agreeable to a supernatural production of things, and to those expressions, by which the work of creation is represented; as in the scripture before-mentioned in which it is said, *God spake, and it was done*; that which was produced by a word's speaking, is performed in an instant. And they suppose, that this is agreeable to the account which we have of that change which shall pass on the bodies of those who shall be found alive at the last day, that it shall be *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. and to some other miracles and supernatural productions, which have been instantaneous. But all this is not sufficient to support an opinion, which cannot be defended any otherwise, than by supposing that the express words of scripture must be understood in an allegorical sense.

There is therefore another account given of this matter, by some divines, of very considerable worth and judgment,\* which, as they apprehend, contains a concession of as much as need be demanded in favour of the instantaneous production of things, as most agreeable to the idea of creation, and yet does not militate against the sense of the account given thereof, in Gen. i. and that is, that the distinct parts of the creation were each of them produced in a moment. As for instance, in the work of the first day, there was the first matter of all things produced in one moment; and, after that, in the same day, light was produced, in another moment, agreeable to those words, *Let there be light, and there was light*; and, in another moment, there was a division of the light from the darkness, and so the work of the first day was finished. And, in the other days, where the works were various, there were distinct

\* See Turret Flenet Tum. I. Loc. 5. Quest. 5.

acts of the divine will, or words of command given concerning their production, which immediately ensued hereupon; and there was, in several instances, an interval between the production of one thing and another, which belonged to the same day's work; particularly, in the sixth day, there was first a word of command given, by which beasts and creeping things were formed, and then another word given forth, by which man was created, when, indeed, there was an approbation of the former part of this day's work, in ver. 26. God says, *That it was good*, before the general approbation, expressed in ver. 31. in the end of the day, was given, when *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*.

There is nothing, in this opinion, (the main reason and foundation whereof has been before observed) that can be much disliked, neither is it very material whether it be defended or opposed; and therefore, I think, they speak with the greatest prudence, as well as temper who reckon this among the number of those questions, which are generally called problematical, that is, such as may be either affirmed or denied, without any great danger of departing from the faith;\* and, indeed, I cannot see that the reasons assigned, which induce persons to adhere to either side of the question, with so much warmth, as to be impatient of contradiction, are sufficiently conclusive.

The main objection brought against their opinion, who plead for an instantaneous production of things in each day, is, that for God to bring the work of each day to perfection in a moment, and, after that, not to begin the work of the next day, till the respective day began, infers God's resting each day from his work; whereas, he is not said to rest till the whole creation was brought to perfection. But I cannot see this to be a just consequence, or sufficient to overthrow this opinion; since God's resting from his work, when the whole was finished, principally intends his not producing any new species of creatures, and not barely his ceasing to produce what he had made; for such a rest as this might as well be applied to his finishing the work of each day, though he took up the whole space of a day therein, as if he had finished it in a moment.

And, on the other hand, when it is objected against the common opinion relating to God's bringing the work of each day to perfection by degrees, so as to take up the space of a day in doing it, that it is not agreeable to the idea of creation. This is no just way of reasoning, nor sufficient to overthrow it; since we generally conclude, that God's upholding providence, which some call, as it were, a continued creation, is no less an instance of divine and supernatural power, than his producing them at first: but this is not performed in an instant; never-

\* *Vid. Witsii in Symbol. Exercit. 2. § 66.*

theless, it is said to be done, as the apostle speaks, in Heb. i. 3. *By the word of his power.* Besides, there are some parts of the creation, which, from the nature of the thing, could hardly be produced in an instant, particularly those works which were performed by motion, which cannot be instantaneous; as the dividing the light from the darkness, the gathering the waters together into one place, so that the dry land should appear; and if this took up more than a moment, why may it not be supposed to take up the space of a day? So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that though it is certain that spirits, such as angels, or the souls of our first parents, could not be otherwise created, than in an instant, inasmuch as they are immaterial, and so do not consist of parts successively formed; yet none ought to determine, with too great peremptoriness, that other works, performed in the six days, must each of them be performed in an instant, or else the work could not properly be called a creation; and therefore the commonly received opinion seems as probable as any other, that has hitherto been advanced, as it is equally, if not more agreeable, to the express words of scripture.

Here we shall give a brief account of the work of the six days, as it is contained in the first chapter of Genesis; in the first day, the first matter out of which all things were produced, was created out of nothing, which is described as being *without form*, that is, not in that form which God designed to bring it into; whereas, in other respects, matter cannot be without all manner of form, or those dimensions that are essential to it, and, as it was created without form, so without motion; so that as God is the Creator of all things, he is the first mover. Nevertheless, I am far from thinking, that all God did, in the creation of things, was by putting every thing in motion, and that this brought all the parts of the creation into their respective form. As an artificer may be said to frame a machine, which, by its motion, will produce other things, which he designed to make by the help thereof, without giving himself any farther trouble; so they suppose, that, by those laws of motion, which God impressed upon matter at first, one part of the creation brought another into the various forms, which they attained afterwards.\* And the first thing that was produced, which was a farther part of the six days work, was light; concerning this, many have advanced their own ill-grounded con-

\* This is the main thing that is advanced by Des Cartes, in his philosophy, which formerly obtained more in the world than it does at present; though there are several divines in the Netherlands, who still adhere to, and defend that hypothesis. This was thought a sufficient expedient to fence against the absurdities of Epicurus, and his followers, who suppose that things attained their respective forms by the fortuitous concurrence of atoms; nevertheless, it is derogatory to the Creator's glory, inasmuch as it sets aside his immediate efficiency in the production of things.



jectures. There are some writers, among the Papists, who have supposed that it was a quality, without a subject,\* which is an obscure and indefensible way of speaking. Others have thought, that hereby we are to understand the angels; but this is to strain the sense of words too far, by having recourse to a metaphor, which is inconsistent with what immediately follows, that God divided the light from the darkness. But it seems most probable that nothing else is intended hereby, but those lucid bodies, which, on the fourth day, were collected into the sun and fixed stars.

To this let me add, that it is more than probable that God, on the first day, created the highest heaven, which is sometimes called his throne, together with the angels, the glorious inhabitants thereof. It is true, Moses, in his history of the creation, is silent as to this matter, unless it may be inferred from those words, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*; though, as has been before observed, something else seems principally to be intended thereby: nevertheless, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that they were created in the beginning of time, and consequently in the first day, from what is said elsewhere, that *when God laid the foundations of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 4, 7. where the angels are represented as celebrating and adoring those divine perfections, which were glorified in the beginning of the work of creation; therefore they were, at that time, brought into being.

On the *second* day, God divided that part of the world, which is above, from that which is below, by an extended space, which is styled the *firmament*, and otherwise called heaven, though distinguished from the highest heaven, or the heaven of heavens; and it is farther observed, that hereby the waters that are above, are separated from those which are below, that is, the clouds from the sea, and other waters, that are in the bowels of the earth.

As for that conjecture of some, taken from hence, and especially from what the Psalmist says, *Praise him ye waters that are above the heavens*, Psal. cxlviii. 4. that there is a vast collection of super-celestial waters, which have no communication with those that are contained in the clouds; this seems to be an ungrounded opinion, not well agreeing with those principles of natural philosophy, which are received in this present age; though maintained by some of the ancient fathers, as principally founded on the sense in which they understand this text; neither do they give a tolerable account of the de-

\* This absurd opinion the Papists are very fond of, inasmuch as it serves their purpose in defending the doctrine of Transubstantiation.



sign of providence in collecting and fixing them there \*. Therefore nothing seems to be intended, in that text, but the waters that are contained in the clouds as it is said, *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds*, Job xxvi. 8. and, indeed, the Hebrew words seem not to be justly translated †; for they ought to be rendered, *Ye waters that are from above in the firmament*, not above the heavens, but the earth, or a considerable distance from it, in the firmament, as the clouds are.

On the *third* day, the sea and rivers were divided from the earth, and the dry land appeared, and the earth brought forth herbs, grass, trees, and plants, with which it is so richly stored, which in a natural way, it has produced ever since.

On the *fourth* day, the sun, moon and stars were made, to enlighten, and, by their influence, as it were, to enliven the world, and so render it a beautiful place, which would otherwise have been a dismal and uncomfortable dungeon; and that hereby the four seasons of the year might be continued in their respective courses, and their due measures set to them: thus it is said, these heavenly bodies were appointed *for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years*, Gen. i. 14.

This has occasioned some to enquire, whether any countenance is hereby given to judicial astrology, or whether the heavenly bodies have any influence on the conduct of human life, which some ancient and modern writers have defended, not without advancing many absurdities, derogatory to the glory of providence, as well as contrary to the nature of second causes, and their respective effects; and, when the moral actions of intelligent creatures are said to be pointed at, or directed by the stars, this is contrary to the laws of human nature, or the nature of man, as a free agent; therefore, whatever be the sense of these words of scripture, it is certain, they give no countenance to this presumptuous and ungrounded practice. But this we shall take occasion to oppose, under a following answer,

\* Ambrose, in his *Hexameron*, Lib. II. cap. 3. as well as Basil, and others, suppose, that the use thereof is to qualify the extraordinary heat of the sun, and other celestial bodies, to prevent their burning the frame of nature, and especially their destroying this lower world; and others think, that they are reserved in store, to answer some particular ends of providence, when God, at any time, designs to destroy the world by a deluge; and consequently they conclude, that it was by a supply of water from thence, that there was a sufficient quantity poured down, when the world was drowned, in the universal deluge: but, though a late ingenious writer, [Vid. Burnet. *Tellur. Theor.* Lib. I. cap. 2.] supposes, that the clouds could afford but a small part of that water, which was sufficient to answer that end, which he supposes to be eight times as much as the sea contains; yet he does not think fit to fetch a supply thereof from the super-celestial stores, not only as supposing the opinion to be ill-grounded, but by being at a loss to determine how these waters should be disposed of again, which could not be accounted for any other way, but by annihilation, since they could not be exhaled by the sun, or contained in the clouds, by reason of their distant situation, as being far above them.

† It is not על תקיע, but מעל לרקיע.

when we consider judicial astrology, as forbidden in the first commandment \*. Therefore, all that we shall add, at present, is, that when the heavenly bodies are said to be appointed *for times and seasons*, &c. nothing is intended thereby, but that they distinguish the times and seasons of the year; or, it may be, in a natural way, have some present and immediate influence on the bodies of men, and some other creatures below them.

There is also another question, which generally occurs when persons treat of this subject, namely, whether there are not distinct worlds of men, or other creatures, who inhabit some of those celestial bodies, which, by late observations, are supposed to be fitted to receive them. This has been maintained by Kepler, bishop Wilkins, and other ingenious writers; and that which has principally led them to assert it, is, because some of them are, as is almost universally allowed, not only bigger than this earth, but they seem to consist of matter, not much unlike to it, and therefore are no less fit to entertain distinct worlds of intelligent creatures. And they farther add, in defence of this argument, that it cannot reasonably be supposed that there should be such a vast collection of matter, created with no other design, but to add to the small degree of light, which the planets, the moon excepted, afford to this lower world. As for any other advantage that they are of to it, any farther than as they are objects, to set forth the wisdom and power of God, this cannot be determined by us; therefore they conclude, that they were formed for the end above mentioned. And some carry their conjectures beyond this, and suppose, that as every one of the fixed stars are bodies, which shine as the sun does, with their own un-borrowed light, and are vastly larger, that therefore there is some other use designed thereby, besides that which this world receives from them, namely, to give light to some worlds of creatures, that are altogether unknown to us. According to this supposition, there are not only more worlds than ours, but multitudes of them, in proportion to the number of the stars, which are inhabited either by men, or some other species of intelligent creatures, which tends exceedingly, in their opinion, to advance the power, wisdom, and goodness, of the great Creator.

The only thing that I shall say, concerning this modern hypothesis, is, that as, on the one hand, the common method of opposition to it, is not, in all respects, sufficient to overthrow the argument in general, especially when men pretend not to determine what kinds of intelligent creatures inhabit these worlds, and when they are not too preremptory in their assertions about this matter; so, on the other hand, when this argument is defended with that warmth, as though it were a neces-

sary and important article of faith, and some not only assert the possibility, or, at least, the probability of the truth thereof, but speak with as much assurance of it, as though it were founded on scripture; and when they conclude that they are inhabited by men, and pretend to describe, not only the form of some of these worlds, but give such an account of the inhabitants thereof, as though they had learned it from one who came down from thence\*; in this respect, they expose the argument, which they pretend to defend, to contempt, and render it justly exceptionable. But, if men do not exceed those due bounds of modesty, which should always attend such disquisitions, and distinguish things that are only probable, from those that are demonstratively certain, and reckon this no other than an ingenious speculation, which may be affirmed, or denied, in common with some other astronomical, or philosophical problems, without considering it, as affecting any article of natural or revealed religion, I would not oppose the argument in general, how much soever I would do the particular explication thereof, as above mentioned: but, when this is brought in, as a matter of debate, in the theologick schools, and disputed with as much warmth, as though it were next to an heresy to deny it, I cannot but express as much dislike thereof, as any have done, who give into the commonly received opinion relating to this matter.

On the *fifth* day, another sort of creatures, endowed with sense, as well as life and motion, were produced, partly out of the waters, and partly out of the earth, that was mixed with them, namely, the fish that were designed to live in the waters, and the winged fowl, which were to fly above them †.

On the *sixth* day, all sorts of beasts, and creeping things, with which the earth is plentifully furnished, were produced out of it. And whereas there are two words used to set forth the different *species* of living creatures, as contra-distinguished from creeping things, namely, the cattle and the beasts of the earth, it is generally supposed to imply the different sorts of beasts, such as are tame or wild, though wild beasts were not, at first, so injurious to mankind as now they are.

In the latter part of the day, when this lower world was

\* Thus the learned Witsius, in *Smybol. Exercitat.* 8. § 78. exposes this notion, by referring to a particular relation given, by one, of mountains, vallies, seas, woods, and vast tracts of land, which are contained in the moon, and a describing the men that inhabit it, and the cities that are built by them, and other things relating hereunto, which cannot be reckoned, in the opinion of sober men, any other than fabulous and romantic.

† This, supposing the fowl to be produced out of the water, mixed with earth, reconciles the seeming contradiction that there is between *Gen. i.* 20. and *chap. ii.* 19. in the former of which it is said, the fowl were created out of the water, and in the latter, out of the earth.



brought to perfection, and furnished with every thing necessary for his entertainment, man, for whose sake it was made, was created out of the dust of the ground ; which will be more particularly considered in a following answer \*.

God having thus produced all things in this order and method, as we have an account thereof in scripture, he fixed, or established the course or laws of nature, whereby the various species of living creatures might be propagated, throughout all succeeding ages, without the interposure of his supernatural power, in a continued creation of them ; and, after this, he rested from his work, when he had brought all things to perfection.

Thus having considered the creation, as a work of six days, it may farther be enquired, whether it can be determined, with any degree of probability, in what time, or season † of the year all things were created. Some are of opinion, that it was in the spring, because, at that time, the face of the earth is renewed every year, and all things begin to grow and flourish ‡. And some of the fathers have assigned this, as a reason of it ; because the Son of God, the second Adam, suffered, and rose from the dead, whereby the world was, as it were, renewed, at the same time of the year. But this argument is of no weight.

Therefore the most probable opinion is, that the world was created at that season of the year, which generally brings all things to perfection ; when the fruits of the earth are fully ripe, and the harvest ready to be gathered in, which is about autumn, the earth being then stored with plenty of all things, for the support of man and beast. It is not, indeed, very material, whether this can be determined or no, nevertheless this seems the more probable opinion, inasmuch as the beginning of the civil year was fixed at that time. Accordingly, the feast of ingathering, which was at this season of the year, is said, in Exod. xxiii. 16. to be *in the end of the year* ; therefore, as one year ended, the other began, at this time, and so continued, till, by a special providence, the beginning of the year was altered, in commemoration of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. And, from that time, there was a known distinction among the Jews, between their beginning of the civil and the ecclesiastical year ; the former of which was the same as it had been from the beginning of the world, and answers to our month September ; from whence it is more than probable, that the world was created at that season of the year. We now proceed,

VI. To consider, the quality, or condition, in which God

\* See Quest. XVII.

† When we speak of the season of the year, we have a particular respect to that part of the earth, in which man at first resided ; being sensible that the seasons of the year vary, according to the different situation of the earth.

‡ ————— *Ver illud erat, Ver magnus agebat Orbis, & Hybernus parcebat statibus Euri.*

Virg. Georg. 2.



created all things, which were, at first, pronounced by him *very good*, Gen. i. 31. It is certain, nothing imperfect can come out of the hand of God, and the goodness of things is their perfection. Every thing that was made, was made exactly agreeable to the idea, or platform thereof, that was laid in the divine mind. All things were good, that is perfect, in their kind, and therefore, there was not the least blemish in the work. Every thing was beautiful, as it was the effect of infinite wisdom, as well as almighty power. Whatever blemishes there are now in the creation, which are the consequence of the curse that sin has brought upon it, these were not in it at first, for that would have been a reflection on the author of it.

And there is another thing, in which the goodness of those things did consist, namely, as they were adapted to shew forth the glory of God in an objective way, whereby intelligent creatures might, as in a glass, behold the infinite perfections of the divine nature, which shine forth therein.

If any enquire, whether God could have made things more perfect than he did? it might easily be replied to this, that he never acted to the utmost of his power, the perfections of creatures were limited by his will; nevertheless, if any persons pretend to find any flaw, or defect of wisdom in the creation of all things, this is no other than a proud and ignorant cavil, which men, through the corruption of their nature, are disposed to make against the great Creator of all things, who regard not the subserviency of things to answer the most valuable ends, and advance his glory, who, *in wisdom has made them all*.

In this respect, the inferior parts of the creation were good; but, if we consider the intelligent part thereof, angels and men, they were good, in a higher sense. As there was no moral blemish in the creation, nor propensity, or inclination to sin, so these were endowed with such a kind of goodness, whereby they were fitted to glorify God, in a way agreeable to their superior natures, and behold and improve those displays of the divine perfections, which were visible in all his other works; which leads us farther to consider what is said concerning them, as the most excellent part of the creation.

QUEST. XVI. *How did God create angels?*

ANSW. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

**T**HERE are two species of intelligent creatures, to wit, angels and men. The former of these are more excellent; and we are in this answer, led to speak concerning their nature,

and the glorious works which they are engaged in: But let it be premised, that this is a doctrine that we could have known little or nothing of, by the light of nature. We might, indeed, from thence, have learned, that God has created some spiritual substances, such as the souls of men; and we might argue, from his power, that he could create other spirits, of different natures and powers, and that some of them might be without bodies, as the angels are; yet we could not have certainly determined that there is such a distinct order of creatures, without divine revelation, since they do not appear to, or visibly converse with us; and whatever impressions may, at any time, be made on our spirits, by good or bad angels, in a way of suggestion, yet this could not have been so evidently distinguished from the working of our own fancy or imagination, were we not assisted in our conceptions about this matter, by what we find in scripture, relating thereunto. Accordingly, it is from thence that the doctrine, which we are entering upon, is principally to be derived; and we shall consider it, as the subject-matter of this answer, in seven heads.

I. There is something supposed, namely, that there are such creatures as angels. This appears, from the account we have of them in the beginning of the creation of all things, *The morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 7. which can be no other than a metaphorical description of them. They are called the *morning stars*, as they exceed other creatures, as much in glory, as the stars do the lower parts of the creation. It would be a very absurd method of expounding scripture to take this in a literal sense, not only because the stars in the firmament do not appear to have been then created, but principally because these are represented, as engaged in a work peculiar to intelligent creatures; and they are called, the *sons of God*, as they were produced by him, and created in his image; whereas men, who are sometimes so called, were not created. They are elsewhere called *spirits*, Psal. civ. 4. to distinguish them from material beings, and a *flame of fire*, to denote their agility and fervency, in executing the divine commands. It is plain, the Psalmist hereby intends the angels; and therefore the words are not to be translated, as some do, *who maketh the winds his angels, and the flame of fire his ministers*, as denoting his making use of those creatures who act without design to fulfil his pleasure; because the apostle, to the Hebrews, chap. i. 7. expressly applies it to them, and renders the text in the same sense as it is in our translation. They are elsewhere styled, *Thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers*, Coloss. i. 16. to denote their being advanced to the highest dignity, and employed in the most honourable services. And that it is not men that the apostle here

speaks of, is evident, because he distinguishes the intelligent parts of the creation into visible and invisible; the visible he speaks of in the following words, ver. 18. in which Christ is said to be *the Head of the body, the church*; therefore here he speaks of invisible creatures advanced to these honours, and consequently he means hereby the angels.

Moreover it appears, that there are holy angels, because there are fallen angels, who are called in scripture, devils; this is so evident, that it needs no proof; the many sins committed by their instigation, and the distress and misery which mankind is subject to, by their means, gives occasion to their being called, *The rulers of the darkness of this world*, Eph. vi. 12. And, because of their malicious opposition to the interest of Christ therein, *spiritual wickedness in high places*. Now it appears, from the apostle Jude's account of them, that they once were holy; and they could not be otherwise, because they are creatures, and nothing impure can proceed out of the hand of God, and, while they were holy, they had their residence in heaven: This they lost, and are said *not to have kept their first estate, but left their own habitation*, being thrust out of it, as a punishment due to their rebellion, and to be *reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude, ver. 6. Now it is plain, from scripture, that it is only a part of the angels that left their first estate; the rest are called *holy angels*, and their number is very great. Thus they are described, as *an innumerable company*, Heb. xii. 22. This is necessary to be observed against the ancient, or modern Sadducees, who deny that there are either angels, or spirits, whether good or bad.

II. We farther observe, that the angels are described, as to their nature, as incorporeal, and therefore called spirits. It is but a little, indeed, that we can know concerning the nature of spirits, in this present state; and the first ideas that we have concerning them, are taken from the nature of our souls, as, in some respects, agreeing with that of angels. Accordingly, being spirits, they have a power of thinking, understanding, willing, chusing, or refusing, and are the subjects of moral government, being under a law, and capable of moral good or evil, happiness or misery.

Moreover, they have a power of moving, influencing, or acting upon material beings, even as the soul moves and influences the body, to which it is united. This we understand concerning the nature and power of angels, as spirits, by comparing them with the nature of the soul; though there is this difference between them, that the souls of men are made to be united to bodies, and to act by and upon them, whereas angels are designed to exist and act without bodies; nevertheless, by



the works, which are often, in scripture ascribed to them, it appears that they have a power to act upon material beings. As for the conjecture of some of the fathers,\* that these spirits are united to some bodies, though more fine and subtil than our's are, and accordingly invisible to us, we cannot but think it a groundless conceit; and therefore to assert it, is only to pretend to be wise above what is written, and to give too great a loose to our own fancies, without any solid argument.

III. It follows, from their being spirits, and incorporeal, that they are immortal, or incorruptible, since nothing is subject to death, or dissolution, but what is compounded of parts; for death is a dissolution of the composition of those parts, that were before united together; but this is proper to bodies. A spirit, indeed, might be annihilated; for the same power that brought it out of nothing, can reduce it again to nothing. But, since God has determined that they shall exist for ever, we must conclude that they are immortal, not only from the constitution of their nature, but by the will of God.

IV. Besides the excellency of their nature, as spirits, they have other super-added endowments; of which, *three* are mentioned in this answer.

1. They were all created holy; and, indeed, it could not be otherwise, since nothing impure could come out of the hands of a God of infinite purity. Creatures make themselves sinners, they were not made so by him; for, if they were, how could he abhor sin, and punish it, as contrary to his holiness; nor could he have approved of all his works, as *very good*, when he had finished them, as he did, Gen. i. 31. if he had created any of the angels in a state of enmity, opposition to, or rebellion against him.

2. They excel in knowledge, or in wisdom, which is the greatest beauty or advancement of knowledge. Accordingly, the highest instance of wisdom in men, is compared to the wisdom of an angel. Thus the woman of Tekoa, when extolling David's wisdom, though with an hyperbolical strain of compliment, compares it to that of *an angel of God*, 2 Sam. xiv. 20. which proves that it was a generally received opinion, that angels exceeded other creatures in wisdom.

3. They are said to be mighty in power: thus the Psalmist speaks of them, as *excelling in strength*, Psal. ciii. 20. and the apostle Paul, when speaking of Christ's being revealed from heaven, in his second coming, says, that it shall be *with his mighty angels*, 2 Thess. i. 7. And, since power is to be judged of by its effects, the great things, which they are sometimes represented, as having done in fulfilling their ministry, in de-

\* *Vid. Augustin. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XV. cap. 23. Tertull. de Idololatria, & alibi passim.*

fence of the church, or in overthrowing its enemies, is a certain evidence of the greatness of their power. Thus we read of the whole Assyrian host, consisting of *an hundred and four-score and five thousand men*, being destroyed in one night; not by the united power of an host of angels, but by one of them. *The angel of the Lord* did it; but this will more evidently appear, when, under a following head, we speak of the ministry of angels.

V. These natural, or super-added endowments, how great soever they are, comparatively with those of other creatures, are subject to certain limitations: their perfections are derived, and therefore are finite. It is true, they are holy, or without any sinful impurity; yet even their holiness falls infinitely short of God's, and therefore it is said concerning him, *Thou only art holy*, Rev. xv. 4. and elsewhere, Job xv. 15. speaking concerning the angels, who are, by a *metonymy*, called the heavens, it is said, *they are not clean in his sight*, that is, their holiness, though it be perfect in its kind, is but finite, and therefore infinitely below his, who is infinitely holy.

Moreover, though they are said, as has been before observed, to excel in knowledge, we must, notwithstanding, conclude, that they do not know all things; and therefore their wisdom, when compared with God's, deserves no better a character than that of folly, Job iv. 18. *His angels he charged with folly*. There are many things, which they are expressly said not to know, or to have but an imperfect knowledge of, or to receive the ideas they have of them by degrees: thus *they know not the time of Christ's second coming*, Matt. xxiv. 36. and they are represented as enquiring into the great mystery of man's redemption, or as *desiring to look into it*, 1 Pet. i. 12.

And to this let me add, that they do not know the hearts of men, at least not in such a way as God is said to *search the heart*, for that is represented as a branch of the divine glory, Jer. xvii. 10. 2 Chron. vi. 30. And, besides this, it may be farther observed, that they do not know future contingencies, unless it be by such a kind of knowledge, as amounts to little more than conjecture; or, if they attain to a more certain knowledge thereof, it is by divine revelation. For God appropriates this to himself, a glory, from which all creatures are excluded; therefore he says, *Shew the things that are to come*, that is, future contingencies, *that we may know that ye are gods*, Isa. xli. 23. which implies, that this is more than what can be said of any finite mind, even that of an angel.

As to the way of their knowing things, it is generally supposed, by divines, that they know them not in a way of intuition, as God does, who is said to know all things in himself, by an underived knowledge; but whatever they know, is either

communicated to them, by immediate divine revelation, or else is attained in a discursive way, as inferring one thing from another; in which respect, the knowledge of the best of creatures appears to be but finite, and infinitely below that which is divine.

Again, though they are said to be mighty in power, yet it is with this limitation, that they are not omnipotent. There are some things, which are the effects of divine power, that angels are excluded from, as being too great for them; accordingly they were not employed in creating any part of the world, nor do they uphold it; for as it is a glory peculiar to God, *to be the Creator of the ends of the earth*, so he, exclusively of all others, is said *to uphold all things by the word of his power*.

And to this we may add, that we have no ground to conclude, that they are employed in the hand of providence, to maintain that constant and regular motion, that there is in the celestial bodies, as some of the ancient philosophers \* have seemed to assert; for this is the immediate work of God, without the agency of any creature subservient thereunto.

Again, to this let me add, that how great soever their power is, they cannot change the heart of man, take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh; or implant that principle of spiritual life and grace in the souls of men, whereby they are said to be *made partakers of a divine nature*, or *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*; for that is ascribed to the exceeding greatness of the divine power, and it is a peculiar glory belonging to the Holy Spirit, whereby believers are said to be born from above; this therefore is too great for the power of angels to effect.

VI. We have an account of the work or employment of angels; it is said, they execute the commands of God, and praise his name. The former of these will be more particularly considered, under a following answer,† when we are led to speak of their being employed by God, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy and justice; and therefore we shall now consider them as engaged in the noble and delightful work of praise; they praise his name. For this end they were created; and, being perfectly holy and happy, they are fitted for, and in the highest degree, devoted to this service. This work was begun by them as soon as ever they had a being: *they sang together*, and celebrated his praise in the beginning of the creation, Job xxxviii. 7.

\* This was the opinion of Aristotle, though he does not call them angels, but intelligent Beings, for angel is a character belonging to them, derived only from scripture; neither do we find that this work is assigned to them, as a part of their ministry therein.

† See Quest. XIX.



And when the Redeemer first came into this lower world, and thereby a work, more glorious than that of creation, was begun by him, they celebrated his birth with a triumphant song; as it is said, that with the angel that brought the tidings thereof to the shepherds, there was a *multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will towards men*, Luke ii. 14. Whether all the hosts of heaven were present at that solemnity, we know not; but there is sufficient ground to conclude, from the harmony that there is in the work and worship of the heavenly inhabitants, that they all celebrated his incarnation with their praises; and this was a part of that worship, which, upon this great occasion, they gave, by a divine warrant, to him, who was then brought into this lower world, Heb. i. 6.

Moreover, they praise God for particular mercies vouchsafed to the church, and for the success of the gospel in the conversion of sinners thereby; on which occasion, they express their joy as our Saviour observes, though it be but *one sinner that repenteth*, Luke xv. 7, 10. And,

*Lastly*, They are represented, as joining in worship with the saints in heaven; for which reason the apostle, speaking concerning the communion that there is between the upper and the lower world, as well as the union between the saints departed, and the angels, in this work of praise, says, *Ye are come unto the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. and they are also represented as joining with all others, which are *before the throne, the number of whom is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*, Rev. v. 11, 12.

This is a branch of that social worship, which they are engaged in; and since we cannot suppose that it is performed without harmony, otherwise it wants a very considerable circumstance, necessary to render it beautiful, and becoming a state of perfection, we must conclude, that there is the greatest order among these heavenly ministers; but whether they are to be considered, as having a government, or hierarchy, among themselves, so that one is superior in office and dignity to others; or whether they have a kind of dominion over one another; or whether some are made partakers of privileges, that others are deprived of; this we pretend not to determine, since scripture is silent as to this matter. And what some have laid down, as though it were deduced from it, is altogether inconclusive; and therefore they, who express themselves so peremptorily on this subject, as though they had received it by

divine inspiration, or were told it by some, who have been conversant among them in heaven, must be reckoned among them whom the apostle speaks of, who *intrude into those things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind*, Colos. ii. 18.

The Papists are very fond of this notion, as being agreeable to that unscriptural hierarchy, which they establish in the church here on earth, which they pretend to be, in some respects, founded upon it, instead of better arguments to support it \*. All the countenance which they pretend to be given to it, in scripture, is taken from the various characters, by which they are described, as *cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, angels, arch-angels*, all which expressions they suppose to signify various ranks and orders among them; and when they speak of three classes, or degrees of dignity, and office, under which they are distributed, and that some of those characters are reduced to one, and others to another of them, this is nothing else but to impose their own chimerical fancies, as matters of faith; and when they speak of some of them, as being of a superior order, and admitted to greater honours than the rest, whom they compare to ministers of state, who always attend the throne of princes, or stand in their presence; and others that are employed in particular services for the good of the church, and are conversant in this lower world: This is a distinction which the scripture says nothing of; for they all behold the face of God in heaven, and are in his immediate presence; and they are all likewise called *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them which shall be the heirs of salvation*.

The great oracle which they have recourse to, where the scripture is silent, is a spurious writing, that goes under the name of Dionysius, the Areopagite, concerning the celestial hierarchy †; which contains not only many things fabulous, but unworthy of him, who was converted at Athens by the apostle

\* It is strenuously maintained by Baronius, Bellarmine, and many other writers; as also by many of the schoolmen, as Durandus, Tho. Aquinas, and others.

† This book is sufficiently proved to be spurious, and not to have been known in the four or five first ages of the church, as not being mentioned by Jerom, Gennadius, and others, who make mention of the writers of their own and former ages, and pass their censures on them, as genuine or spurious. And, from others of the Fathers, who lived in those centuries, it plainly appears, that the doctrines maintained in this book, concerning the celestial hierarchy, were not then known by the church. It is also proved to be spurious, because the author thereof makes mention of holy places, such as temples, altars, &c. for divine worship, and catechumens, and the like, and many other things, unknown to the church till the fourth century; and he uses the word *Hypostases* to signify the divine Persons, which was not used till then. He also speaks of the institution of monks, and various sorts of them, which were not known till long after the apostolic age; yea, he quotes a passage out of Clemens Alexandrinus, who lived in the third century. These, and many other arguments, to the same purpose, are maintained, not only by Protestants, but some impartial Popish writers, which sufficiently prove it spurious. See Dailleus *De Scrip. Dionys. Areop. and Du Pin's history of ecclesiastical writers*. Cent. 1. Page 32—34.

Paul's ministry, Acts xvii. 34. as well as disagreeable to the sentiments of the church in the age in which he lived ; therefore, passing by this vain and trifling conjecture, all that we can assert, concerning this matter, is, that there is a beautiful order among the angels, though not of this kind ; and this appears very much in that social worship, which is performed by them.

And this leads us to enquire how they communicate their ideas to each other, though destitute of organs of speech, like those that men have. That they do, some way or other, impart their minds to one another, is sufficiently evident, otherwise we cannot see how they could join together, or agree in that worship, which is performed by them, and those united hallelujahs, with which they praise God, and so answer the end of their creation. That they converse together is evident, since they are represented as doing so, in several places of scripture : thus the prophet speaks of the angel that *talked with him* ; he *went forth, and another angel went out to meet him*, Zech. ii. 3. and elsewhere it is said, concerning them, that one cried to another, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts ; the whole earth is full of his glory*, Isa. vi. 3. and the apostle John speaks of *an angel ascending from the east, who cried with a loud voice to four other angels*, Rev. vii. 2, 3. who were performing a part of their ministry here on earth, and giving them a charge relating thereto ; and elsewhere he again represents one angel as speaking to another, and *crying with a loud voice*, &c. chap. xix. 17. In some of these instances, if the voices uttered by them were real, this may be accounted for, by supposing that they assumed bodies for the same purpose, and so communicated their minds to each other, in a way not much unlike to what is done by man. But this is not their ordinary way of conversing with each other : notwithstanding, we may, from hence, infer, and from many other scriptures, that might be brought to the same purpose, that there is some way or other by which they communicate their thoughts to one another. How this is done, is hard to determine ; whether it be barely by an act of willing, that others should know what they desire to impart to them or by what other methods it is performed ; it is the safest way for us, and it would be no disparagement were we the wisest men on earth to acknowledge our ignorance of it, rather than to attempt to determine a thing so much out of our reach, in this imperfect state, in which we know so little of the nature or properties of spirits, especially those that are without bodies. It is therefore sufficient for us to conclude, that they converse together, when joined in social worship ; but how they do this, is altogether unknown to us.

VII. Notwithstanding all the advantages which the angels had from those natural endowments, with which they were crea-



ted, yet it is farther observed, that they were subject to change. Absolute and independent immutability is an attribute peculiar to God ; so that whatever immutability creatures have, it is by his will and power. Some of the angels, who were created holy, were not only subject to change, but they *kept not their first estate*, Jude, ver. 6. and, from being the sons of God, became enemies and rebels ; which is an evident proof of the natural mutability of creatures, if not confirmed in a natural state of holiness and happiness ; and we have ground to conclude, from hence, that the rest might have fallen, as well as they, had they not been favoured with the grace of confirmation, which rendered their state of blessedness unchangeable. But this will be farther considered, under a following answer \*.

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QUEST. XVII. *How did God create man ?*

ANSW. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man ; endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls, made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures, yet subject to fall.

**I**N this answer it is observed,

I. That man was created after all other creatures. There was a sort of *climax*, or gradation in the work of creation ; and that the wisdom and power of God might be more admired herein, he proceeded from things that were less to those that were more perfect. Man, who is the most excellent creature in this lower world, was framed the last, inasmuch as God designed hereby not only to give a specimen of his power, wisdom, and goodness, but that the glory of those perfections, which shine forth in all his other works, might be adored and magnified by him, as a creature fitted for that purpose. And his being created after all other things, is not only an instance of the bounty and goodness of God, in that the world, which was designed to be the place of his abode, should be stored with all those provisions that were necessary for his entertainment and delight ; but that he might hereby be induced to give him the glory that was due to his name, and all other creatures, that were formed before him, might be objects leading him to it.

II. As to what concerns the difference of sex, it is farther observed, that man was made male and female. Adam was

\* See Quest. XIX.

first formed, concerning whom we read, which is an humbling consideration, that his *body was formed of the dust of the ground*, from whence he took his name. This God puts him in mind of, after his fall, when he says, *Dust thou art*, Gen. iii. 19. And the best of men have sometimes expressed the low thoughts they have of themselves, by acknowledging this as the first original of the human nature. Thus Abraham, when standing in the presence of God, says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes*, Gen. xviii. 27. And this character is considered, as universally belonging to mankind, when it is said, *Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was*, Eccles. xii. 7.

As for the woman, it is said, she was formed of the rib of the man. The reason of her formation is particularly assigned, *It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help-meet for him*, Gen. ii. 18. There was a garden planted for his delight, and the beasts of the earth brought, and given to him, as his property ; and his sovereignty over them was expressed by his giving names to every living creature : But these were not fitted to be his companions, though designed for his use. He was, notwithstanding, alone ; therefore God, designing him a greater degree of happiness, formed one that might be a partner with him, in all the enjoyments of this life, that hereby he might experience the blessings of a social life ; and that, according to the laws of nature, by this means the world might be inhabited, and its Creator glorified, by a numerous seed, that should descend from him.

From Adam's being first formed, the apostle infers his pre-eminence of sex, 1 Tim. ii. 11—13. compared with 1 Cor. xi. 8, 9. though not of nature ; the woman being, in that respect, designed to be a sharer with him in his present condition, and future expectation. From her being formed of a rib, or, as some understand it, out of the side of man, some curious, or over-nice observations have been made, which it is needless to mention. The account, which the scripture gives of it, is, that her being part of himself, argued the nearness of relation, and unalienable affection, which ought to be between man and wife, as Adam observed, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*, Gen. ii. 23, 24. and our Saviour, as referring to the same thing, says, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh*. Matth. xix. 5.

III. The next thing that may be observed, is, that these were the first parents of all mankind ; for the apostle expressly calls Adam the first man, 1 Cor. xv. 45. And this is very agreeable to the account which Moses gives of his creation, on the sixth day, from the beginning of time. This is a truth so generally

received, that it seems almost needless to insist any farther on the proof thereof. The very heathen, that knew not who the first man was, nor where, or when, he was created, did, notwithstanding, allow, in general, that there was one, from whom all descended ; therefore, when the apostle Paul argued with them, that *God had made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth*, Acts xvii. 26. none of them pretended to deny it. And, none who own the divine authority of scripture, ever questioned the account which Moses gives hereof, till a bold writer, about the middle of the last century, published a book, in which he advanced a new and fabulous notion ; that there was a world of men who lived before Adam was created \*, and that these were all heathen ; and that Moses speaks of their creation, as what was many ages before Adam, in Gen. i. and of Adam's in chap. ii. whom he supposes to have been created in some part of the world, which was then uninhabited, where he was designed to live, and to be the father of the church, which was to descend from him ; and, being so far remote from the rest of mankind, he knew not that there was any other men besides himself, till his family increased, and some of them apostatized from the faith ; and, in particular, Cain, and his descendents *went out from the presence of the Lord*, and dwelt among them. And whereas Adam is called, by the apostle Paul, *the first man*, he supposes that he is styled so only as contra-distinguished from Christ, who is called *the second man*, designing thereby to compare the person, whom he supposes to have been the head of the Jewish church, with him who is the head of the Christian church. And he insists largely on, and perverts that scripture, in Rom. v. 13. where it is said, *Until the law, sin was in the world* ; as though the sense of it were, that there was a sinful generation of men in the world, before God erected his church, and gave laws to it, when he created Adam, as the head and father thereof ; whereas the apostle there speaks of sin's prevailing in the world before the law was given by Moses ; and as for the historical account of the creation of man in scripture, it is plain that Moses speaks of the creation of man in general, male and female, Gen. i. 27. and, in chap. ii. gives a particular account of the same thing, and speaks of the manner of the formation of Adam and Eve. Besides, when God had created Adam, it is expressly said, in Gen.

\* This book, which is called, *Systema Theologicum*, in which this matter is pretended to be defended, was published by one Peirerius, about the middle of the last century ; and, being written in Latin, was read by a great many of the learned world. And, inasmuch as the sense of many scriptures is strained by him to defend it, and hereby contempt was cast upon scripture in general, and occasion given to many, who are so disposed, to reproach and burlesque it ; therefore some have thought it worth their while to take notice of, and confute this new doctrine ; after which, the author thereof, either being convinced of his error thereby, as some suppose, or being afraid that he should suffer persecution for it, recanted his opinion, and turned Papist.



ii. 5. that *there was not a man to till the ground*, therefore there was no other man living, which is directly contrary to this chimerical opinion. And, if there had been a world of men before Adam, what occasion was there for him to be created out of the dust of the ground? He might have been the father of the church, and yet descended from one that was then in being, in a natural way; or, if God designed that he should live at a distance from the rest of the world, he might have called him from the place of his abode, as he afterwards did Abraham, without exerting power in creating him; and he might have ordered him to have taken a wife out of the world, without creating a woman for that purpose.

It would be too great a digression, nor would it answer any valuable end, for me to take notice of every particular argument brought in defence of this notion: but though the book we speak of, be not much known in the world, yet the notion is defended and propagated by many Atheists and Deists, who design hereby to bring the scripture-history and religion in general into contempt; therefore I am obliged, in opposition to them, to answer an objection or two.

*Object. 1.* If Adam was the first man, and his employment was tilling the ground, where had he those instruments of husbandry, that were necessary, in order thereto, and other things, to subserve the various occasions of life?

*Ans.* This may easily be answered, by supposing that he had a sufficiency of wisdom to find out every thing that was needful for his use and service, whatever improvement might be made in manual arts, by future ages; but this objection, though mentioned amongst the rest, is not much insisted on. Therefore,

*Object. 2.* There is another objection, which some think a little more plausible, taken from what is contained in Gen. iv. where we read of Cain's killing his brother Abel, which was a little before the *hundred and thirtieth year* of the world, as appears, by comparing chap. v. 3. with chap. iv. 25. in which it is said, *Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat Seth*; upon which occasion, his wife acknowledges it as a mercy, that *God had appointed her another seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew*. Now, if we observe the consequence of this murder; how Cain, as it is said, in chap. iv. 16. *went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod*; and, in ver. 17. that he *built a city, and called the name of it after the name of his son, Enoch*; from whence they infer, that, in a little above *an hundred and thirty years* after the world was created, there were several colonies settled in places remote from the land of Eden, where Adam, and his posterity, dwelt; and the inhabitants of those countries were of a different reli-

gion from him, otherwise Cain's living among them would not be styled, his *going out from the presence of the Lord*. And it is not said, that Cain peopled that land, but he went there, that is, dwelt, amongst the inhabitants thereof; and it must be by their assistance that he built this city, inasmuch as it is probable that the art of building, at this time, was hardly known by our first parents, and their descendants; but they lived, separate from the world, in tents, and worshipped God in that way, which they received by divine revelation, being but few in number, while other parts of the world might be as much peopled as they are, at this day.

*Answ.* But to this it may be answered that as this chimerical opinion sets aside; or perverts the scripture-account of things, so the absurdity of it may be easily manifested. And,

1. If they suppose that the number of Adam's posterity were small, and inconsiderable, when Cain slew his brother, and built the city before-mentioned, this will appear to be an ungrounded conjecture, if the blessing, which God conferred on man in his first creation, of *increasing, multiplying, and replenishing the earth*, Gen. i. 28. took place, as it doubtless did, and that in an uncommon degree, the necessity of things requiring it; therefore it is not absurd to suppose, that, at least, as many children were generally born at a birth, and in as early an age of the mother's life, as have been, or are, in any uncommon instances in latter ages. It is also very probable, that the time of child-bearing continued many years longer than it now doth, in proportion to the number of years, in which the life of man exceeded the present standard thereof; and if the age of man was extended to eight or nine hundred years, we may conclude that there were but few that died young. If these things be taken for granted, which seem not, in the least, improbable, any one, who is curious in his enquiries about this matter, and desires to know what a number of people might be born in *one hundred and thirty years*, will find it will be so great, that they might spread themselves through many countries, far distant from the place where Adam dwelt; and therefore there is no need to suppose, that those, with whom Cain dwelt in the *land of Nod*, were persons that lived before Adam was created. But, that this may more abundantly appear, let it be farther considered,

2. That though we read of Cain's *going out from the presence of the Lord*, and his dwelling in the *land of Nod*, and *building a city*, immediately after the account of Abel's death, and therefore it is taken for granted, that this was done soon after, that is, about the *hundred and thirtieth year* of the world; yet there is no account that this was done immediately, or some few years after, in scripture, which contains the

history of the life of Cain, in a few verses, without any chronological account of the time, when these things were said to be done by him, and therefore it seems probable, that this was done some hundreds of years after Cain slew Abel; so that we need not enquire what a number of persons might be in the world in *one hundred and thirty years*, but in *seven or eight hundred years*, and then the world might be almost as full of people, as it is now at present, and then the greatest part of the world might be also degenerate, and strangers to the true religion; so that Cain might easily be said to go out of the presence of the Lord, and choose to live with those that were apostates from him, and served other gods; therefore no advantage is gained against the scripture-history by those, who in contempt of it, defend this ill-grounded opinion.

Thus we have considered man, as created male and female, and our first parents, as the common stock, or root, from whence all descended; we shall now take a view of the constitution, or frame of the human nature, and consider,

IV. The two constituent parts of man, namely, the soul and body. With respect to the former of these, he is, as it were allied to angels, or, to use the scripture-expression, *made a little lower* than them, Psal. viii. 5. As to the other, which is his inferior part, to wit, the body, he is *of the earth, earthy*, and set upon a level with the lower parts of the creation. And here we shall,

1. Consider the body of man, inasmuch as it was first formed before the soul; and according to the course and laws of nature, it is first fashioned in the womb, and then the soul is united to it, when it is organized, and fitted for its reception: There are many things very wonderful in the structure of human bodies, which might well give occasion to the inspired writer to say, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*, Psal. cxxxix. 14. This is a subject that would afford us much matter to enlarge on, and from thence, to take occasion to admire the wisdom and goodness of God in this part of his work.

Many things might be observed from the shape, and erect posture thereof, and the several conveniences that arise from thence, and how we are hereby instructed that we were not born to look downwards to the earth, but up to heaven, from whence our chief happiness is derived. We might here consider the various parts of the body, whereof none are superfluous or redundant, and their convenient situation for their respective uses; the harmony and contexture thereof, and the subserviency of one part to another; and particularly, how it is so ordered by the wisdom of the Creator, that those parts, which are most necessary for the preservation of life, which, if hurt, would occasion immediate death, are placed most in-



ward, that they might be sufficiently defended from all external injuries that might befall them; and also the disposition of those parts, that are the organs of sense, and their contexture, whereby they are fitted to exert themselves, in such a way, as is most proper to answer the ends thereof. We might also consider the temperature of the body, whereby its health and vigour is maintained; and that vast variety that there is in the countenances, and voices of men, in which there is hardly an exact similitude in any two persons in the world; and the wise end designed by God herein, for the advantage of mankind in general; these things might have been particularly insisted on, and have afforded many useful observations; but to enlarge on this head, as it deserves, would be to divert too much from our present design; and it will be very difficult for any one to treat on this subject with more advantage than it has been done by several learned and judicious writers, being set in a much clearer light than it has been in former ages, by those improvements, which have been lately made in anatomy; and it is insisted on so particularly, and with such demonstrative evidence, by them, that I shall rather choose to refer the reader to those writings, in which it is contained, than insist on it\*.

All that I shall farther observe is, that there is something wonderful in that natural heat that is continued in the bodies of men, for so many years together, and in the motion of the heart, the circulation of the blood and juices, the continual supply of animal spirits, and their subserviency to muscular motion: these things, and many other of the like nature, are all wonderful in the bodies of men.

If it be objected, that there are other creatures, who, in some respects, excel men, as to what concern their bodies, and the powers thereof; as the vulture, and many other creatures, in quickness of sight and hearing; the dog in the sense of smelling, and many others excel them in strength and swiftness; and some inanimate creatures, as the sun, and other heavenly bodies, in beauty.

To this it may be answered: That the bodies of men must be allowed to have a superior excellency, if considered as united to their souls, and rendered more capable of glorifying God, and enjoying that happiness, which no creatures, below them, are capable of. It is true, man is not endowed with such quickness of sense, strength of body, and swiftness of motion, as many other creatures are; some of which endowments tend to the preservation of their own lives: others are conducive to the advantage of man, who has every thing, in

\* See Ray's wisdom of God, in the work of creation, Part. II. and Derham's Physico. Theology, Book V.

the frame of his nature, necessary to his happiness, agreeable to his present station of life, for his glorifying God, and answering higher ends than other creatures were made for; so that if we judge of the excellencies of the human nature, we must conceive of man, more especially as to that more noble part of which he consists. Accordingly,

2. We shall consider him as having (a) a rational and immortal soul, which not only gives a relative excellency to the body, to which it is united, and, by its union therewith, preserves it from corruption, but uses the various organs thereof, to put forth actions, which are under the conduct of reason; and that which renders it still more excellent, is, that it is capable of being conversant about objects abstracted from matter, and of knowing and enjoying God. And whatsoever obstructions it may meet with from the temperament of the body, to which it is united, or what uneasiness soever it may be exposed to from its sympathy therewith; yet none of those things, which tend to destroy the body, or separate it from the soul, can affect the soul so far, as to take away its power of acting, but when separate from it, it remains immortal, and is capable of farther improvements, and a greater degree of happiness.

We might here proceed to prove the immortality of the soul; but that we shall have occasion more particularly to do, under a following answer \*, when we consider the souls of believers,

\* See Quest. lxxxvi.

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(a) The *Origin* of the soul, at what time it enters into the body, whether it be *immediately* created at its entrance into the body, or comes out of a *pre-existent state*, are things that cannot be known from any fitness or reasonableness founded in the nature of things; and yet it is as necessary to believe this is done according to *certain reasons* of wisdom and goodness, as to believe there is a God.

Now, who can say that it is the same thing, whether human souls are created *immediately* for human bodies, or whether they come into them out of some *pre-existent state*? For aught we know, one of these ways may be exceeding *fit* and *wise*, and the other as entirely *unjust* and *unreasonable*; and yet, when Reason examines either of these ways, it finds itself *equally perplexed* with difficulties, and knows not which to chuse: but if souls be immaterial [as all philosophy now proves] it must be one of them.

And perhaps, the reason why God has revealed so little of these matters in holy Scripture itself, is, because any more particular revelation of them, would but have perplexed us with greater difficulties, as not having capacities or ideas to *comprehend* such things. For, as all our natural knowledge is confined to ideas borrowed from *experience*, and the use of our *senses* about *human things*; as Revelation can only teach us things that have some likeness to what we already know; as our notions of equity and justice are very limited, and confined to certain actions between man and man; so, if God had revealed to us more particularly, the *origin* of our souls, and the *reason* of their state in human bodies, we might perhaps have been exposed to greater difficulties by such knowledge, and been less able to vindicate the justice and goodness of God, than we are by our present ignorance.

as made perfect in holiness, and thereby fitted for, and afterwards received into heaven, having escaped the grave, (in which the body is to be detained until the resurrection) which is the consequence of its immortality. And therefore we proceed,

V. To consider another excellency of the human nature, as man was made after the image of God. To be made a little lower than the angels, as he is represented by the Psalmist, in Psal. viii. 5. is a very great honour conferred on him: But what can be said greater of him, than that he was made after the image of God? However, though this be a scripture-expression, denoting the highest excellency and privilege, yet it is to be explained consistently with that infinite distance that there is between God and the creature. This glorious character, put upon him does not argue him to partake of any divine perfection; nor is it inconsistent with the nothingness of the best of finite beings, when compared with God; for whatever likeness there is in man to him, there is, at the same time, an infinite dissimilitude, or disproportion, as was before observed, when we considered the difference between those divine attributes, which are called incommunicable, from others, which some call communicable.

If it be enquired, wherein the image of God in man consists? It would be preposterous and absurd, to the last degree, to suppose that this has any respect to the lineaments of the body; for there is a direct opposition rather than similitude, between the spirituality of the divine nature, and the bodies of men. And, indeed, it would have been needless to have mentioned this, had not some given occasion for it, by perverting the sense of those scriptures, in which God is represented, in a metaphorical way, in condescension to our common mode of speaking, as though he had a body, or bodily parts; from whence they have inferred, that he assumed a body, at first, as a model, according to which he would frame that of man; which is not only absurd, but blasphemous, and carries it own confutation in it.

There are others, who suppose that man was made after the image of Christ's human nature, which, though it doth not altogether contain so vile a suggestion as the former, yet it is groundless and absurd, inasmuch as Christ was made after the likeness of man, as to what concerns his human nature, Phil. ii. 7. and man, in that respect, was not made after his image.

And to this let me add, that when the scripture speaks of man, as made after the image of God, it plainly gives us ground to distinguish between it and that glory which is peculiar to Christ, who is said not only to be made after his image, but to be *the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. and the ex-



*press image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. and therefore that there is, in this respect, such a similitude between the Father and Son, as cannot, in any sense be applied to the likeness, which is said to be between God and the creature.

Moreover, when we speak of man, as made after the image of God, as consisting in some finite perfections communicated to him, we must carefully fence against the least supposition, as though man were made partaker of any of the divine perfections. It is true, the apostle speaks concerning believers, as being made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. for the understanding of which we must take heed, that we do not pervert the mind of the Holy Ghost herein; for nothing is intended by this expression, in which the image of God is set forth, but a sanctified nature, or, as I would rather choose to render it, *a divine nature*, derived from, and, in some respects, conformed to him but yet infinitely below him.

This image of God in man, in this answer, is said to consist particularly in three things.

1. In knowledge. This is what we generally call the natural image of God in man, which he is endowed with, as an intelligent creature; not that the degree of knowledge, which the best of men are capable of, contains in it any thing properly divine as to its formal nature; for there is a greater disproportion between the infinite knowledge of the divine mind, and that of a finite creature, than there is between the ocean and a drop of water: But it signifies, that as God has a comprehensive knowledge of all things, man has the knowledge of some things, agreeable to his finite capacity, communicated to him; and thus we are to understand the apostle's words, when he speaks of man's being *renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him*, Col. iii. 10.

2 It consists in righteousness and holiness. This some call the moral image of God in man; or, especially if we consider it as restored in sanctification, it may more properly be called his supernatural image, and it consists in the rectitude of the human nature, as opposed to that sinful deformity and blemish, which renders fallen man unlike to him. Therefore we must consider him, at first, as made upright, Eccles. vii. 29. so that there was not the least tincture, or taint of sin, in his nature, or any disposition, or inclination to it; but all the powers and faculties of the soul were disposed to answer the ends of its creation, and thereby to glorify God.

And to this some add, that the image of God, in man, consisted in blessedness; so that as God is infinitely blessed in the enjoyment of his own perfections, man was, in his way and measure, blessed, in possessing and enjoying those perfections, which he received from God. But, though this be true, yet I

would rather choose to keep close to the scripture mode of speaking, which represents the image of God in man, as consisting in *righteousness and true holiness*, Eph. iv. 24.

Man, being thus made after the image of God, is farther said in this answer, to have the law of God written in his heart, and, power to fulfil it. Herein God first made, and then dealt with him as a reasonable creature, the subject of moral government; and, that this law might be perfectly understood, it was written on his heart, that hereby he might have a natural knowledge of the rule of his obedience, and might, with as little difficulty, be apprised of his duty to God, as he was of any thing that he knew, as an intelligent creature.

And inasmuch as he was indispensably obliged to yield obedience to this law, and the consequence of violating it would be his ruin, God, as a just and gracious Sovereign, gave him ability to fulfil it; so that he might not, without his own fault, by a necessity of nature, rebel against him, and so plunge himself into inevitable misery.

3. It is farther observed, that the image of God, in man, consisted in man's dominion over the creatures. This is expressly revealed in scripture, when God says, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*, Gen. i. 26. and the Psalmist describes this dominion in other words, though not much differing, as to the general import thereof, when he says, *Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen; yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas*, Psal. viii. 6—8. This dominion consisted in the right which he had to use and dispose of the inferior creatures, for his comfort and delight, and to serve him, in all things necessary, for the glorifying his Creator, though he had no right, nor inclination, in his state of integrity, to abuse them, as fallen man does, in various instances.

VI. The last thing observed in this answer, is that notwithstanding the advantageous circumstances, in which man was created, yet he was subject to fall; by which we are not to understand that he was forced or compelled to fall, through any necessity of nature; for that would have been inconsistent with the liberty of his will to what was good, or that rectitude of nature, whereby he was not only fitted to perform perfect obedience, but to avoid every thing that has a tendency to render him guilty before God, and thereby to ruin him.

As for the devil, he had no power to force the will; nor

could he lay any snare to entangle and destroy man, but what he had wisdom enough, had he improved his faculties as he ought, to have avoided : But, notwithstanding all this, it is evident that he was subject to fall, for that appears by the event ; so that, though he had no disposition to sin in his nature, for God could not create a person in such a state, since that would render him the author of sin, yet he did not determine to prevent it ; though this, as will be hereafter considered, was a privilege which man would have attained to, according to the tenor of the covenant he was under, had he performed the conditions thereof, and so would have been confirmed in holiness and happiness ; but this, it is certain, he was not at first, because he fell : But of this, more under a following answer.

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QUEST. XVIII. *What are God's works of Providence ?*

ANSW. God's works of Providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures ; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

**I**N speaking to this answer, we must consider what we are to understand by providence in general. It supposes a creature brought into being ; and consists in God's doing every thing that is necessary for the continuance thereof, and in his ordering and over-ruling second causes, to produce their respective effects, under the direction of his infinite wisdom, and the influence of his almighty power. It is owing to this that all things do not sink into nothing, or that every thing has what it wants to render it fit to answer the end designed in the creation thereof. Pursuant to this general description of providence, it may be considered as consisting of two branches, namely, God's upholding, or preserving, all creatures ; and enabling them to act by his divine concurrence or influence : and his governing or ordering them, and all their actions, for his own glory.

I. That God upholds all things. This he is expressly said to do, *by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3. and it may be farther evinced, if we consider that God alone is independent, and self-sufficient, therefore the idea of a creature implies in it dependence ; that which depended on God for its being, must depend on him for the continuance thereof. If any creature, in this lower world, could preserve itself, then surely this might be said of man, the most excellent part thereof ; But it is certain, that man cannot preserve himself ; for if he could, he would not be subject to those decays of nature, or those daily infirmities, which all are liable



unto ; and he would, doubtless preserve himself from dying, for that is agreeable to the dictates of nature, which would, were it possible for him to do it, prevent itself from being dissolved. And if man could preserve himself in being, he might, and doubtless, would, by his own skill, maintain himself in a prosperous condition in this world, and always lead a happy life, since this is what nature cannot but desire : But, inasmuch as all are liable to the afflictions and miseries of this present state, it plainly argues that they are unavoidable, and consequently that there is a providence that maintains men, and all other creatures, in that state in which they are.

In considering the upholding providence of God, we must observe, that it is either immediate, or mediate. The former of these consists in his exerting that power, by which we live, move, and act, which is sometimes called the divine manutency ; and this cannot be exerted by a finite medium, any more than that power that brought all things into being.

But besides this, God is said, according to the fixed laws of nature, to preserve his creatures by the instrumentality of second causes. Thus life is maintained by the air in which we breathe, and the food, by which we are nourished ; and every thing that tends to our comfort in life, is communicated to us by second causes, under the influence and direction of providence, to which it is as much to be ascribed, as though it were brought about without means : thus Jacob considers God, as giving him *bread to eat, and raiment to put on*, Gen. xxviii. 20. whatever diligence or industry was used by him to attain them ; and God is elsewhere said *to give food to all flesh* ; Psal. cxxxvi. 25. and, concerning brute creatures, it is said, *These wait all upon thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season ; that thou givest them, they gather ; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good*, Psal. civ. 27, 28.

II. God governs all things by his providence, so that nothing happens by chance to him. This appears from those admirable displays of wisdom, which come under our daily observation, in the government of the world. Many things are ordered to subserve such ends, as are attained by them without their own knowledge ; as the sun and other heavenly bodies which are a common blessing to this lower world ; so the rain, the air, vapours, minerals, beasts, vegetables, and all other creatures, below men, answer their respective ends, without their own design, and not by the will or management of any intelligent creature therefore it must be by the direction of providence.

That there is a providence, that governs the world, is so obvious a truth, that it has been denied by none, but the most stupid part of mankind, who wholly abandoned themselves to sensuality and libertinism, and hardly owned that there is a

God, or such things as moral good or evil; and these scarce deserve the name of men.\* All others, I say, have owned a providence, as what is the necessary consequence of the belief of a God, and therefore it is a doctrine founded in the very nature of man; so that the heathen who have had no other light than that affords, have expressed their belief of it, and have compared the divine Being to a pilot, who sits at the helm and steers the ship; or to one that guides the chariot where he pleases; or to a general, that marshals and gives directions to the soldiers under his command: or to a king, that sits on the throne, and gives laws to all his subjects. Accordingly, the apostle Paul, when arguing with the Athenians, from principles which they maintained, takes it for granted, as what would not be contested by them, that there was a providence, when he says, *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. And, indeed, this truth appears to have been universally believed, in the world, by men of all religions, whether true, or false. As it is the foundation of all true worship; so, that worship, which was performed by the heathen as derived partly from the light of nature, and partly from tradition; and those prayers, that were directed to God, and altars erected for his service, all argue their belief, not only of God, but of a providence; so that this doctrine is agreeable to the light of nature, as well as plainly evinced from scripture.

III. The providence of God extends itself to all the actions of creatures. That this may appear, let it be considered; that there are innumerable effects produced by, what we call, second causes; this is allowed by all. Moreover, every second cause implies, that there is a first cause, that guides and directs it. Now no creature is the first cause of any action, for that is pe-

\* It was denied, indeed, by the Epicureans, who were detested by the better sort of heathen, and reckoned the Libertines of the respective ages, in which they lived; and, though they may occasionally speak of a God, yet were deemed no better than Atheists. Diogenes Laertius [Vid. in Vit. Epicuri, Lib. X.] in the close of the life of Epicurus, gives a brief account of his sentiments about religion, which he lays down in several short Aphorisms; the first of which begins with this memorable passage, *Τὸ μακάριον καὶ ἀθάνατον ἐστὶ αὐτὸ παρὰ μάλ᾽ ἔχει ἐστὶ ἄλλος παρ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ*, Quod beatum & immortale est neque ipsum negotia habet, neque alia præbet; which expressions some of the wiser heathen have taken just offence at. And accordingly Cicero, [Vid. ejusd. Lib. I. De Nat. Deor.] referring to this passage, says, that whatever veneration Epicurus pretended to have for the gods, yet he was no better than an Atheist, and brought a god into his philosophy, that he might not fall under the displeasure of the senate at Athens: thus he says, *Novi ego Epicureos omnia Sigilla venerantes; quanquam video nonnullis videri Epicurum, ne in offensionem Atheniensium caderet, verbis reliquisse Deos, resustulisse*: And Lactantius observes the same thing concerning him, and describes him as a deceiver and a hypocrite, *Hic vero si aliud sensit, & aliud locutus est; quid aliud appellandus est, quam deceptor, bilinguis, malus, & propterea stultus?* Vid. Lactant. de Ira Dei, Cap. 4. And as for the Poets, it was only the most vain among them, who gave countenance to immorality, and endeavoured to debauch the age in which they lived, that gave out this notion; and, in our age, this seems to be one of the first principles of Deism.

cular to God, therefore all creatures act under his influence, that is, by his providence. If it is in God, not only that we live, but move, and act, then there is no motion, or action in the world, whether in things with, or without life, but is under the influence of providence. Therefore we shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about all things, the least as well as the greatest, and about things that are agreeable, or contrary to the laws of nature, and particularly how it is conversant about the actions of intelligent creatures, such as angels and men.

1. The greatest things are not above, nor the least and most inconsiderable below the care and influence of providence, and consequently it must extend itself to all things. The most excellent of finite beings are but creatures, and therefore they are dependent upon God, as much as the least: thus it is said, *He doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, as well as among the inhabitants of the earth*, Dan. iv. 35. Sometimes we read of the providence of God, as conversant about the most glorious parts of the frame of nature: it is by his influence that the sun appears to perform its regular motions; he hath fixed it in the heavens, as in a tabernacle appointed for it. And those creatures that are most formidable to men, as the leviathan, which is represented as the fiercest of all creatures, who abide in the sea, and the lion of all the beasts of the forest; these are described as subject to his providence, and receiving their provisions from it, Job xli. Psal. civ. 21. and the inconsiderable *sparrow* doth not *fall to the ground* without it, Matt. x. 29, 30. and the very *hairs of our head are all numbered*; which is a proverbial expression, to denote the particular concern of providence, as conversant about the most minute actions of life.

2. The providence of God is conversant about those things which come to pass, either agreeably, or contrary, to the fixed laws of nature, the whole frame whereof is held together by him: the successive returns of *seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night*, are all ordered by him, Gen. viii. 22. the elements and meteors are subject to his appointment; *Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and stormy wind, fulfil his word*, Psal. cxlviii. 8. *He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven, to make the weight for the winds, and he weigheth the waters by measure; when he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder*, Job xxviii. 24—26.

And as for effects, that are above, or contrary to the course of nature, these are subject to, and ordered by, his providence. It was contrary to the course of nature for the ravens, which are birds of prey, to bring provisions to mankind, yet these were ordeerd to bring a supply of food to the prophet Elijah,



1 Kings xvii. 4. And the lions, who knew no difference between Daniel and his persecutors, and were naturally inclined to devour one, as well as the other, were obliged to make a distinction between them, and not to hurt the one, but immediately to devour the other, Dan. vi. 22, 24. And a whale was provided, by providence, to receive and bring the prophet Jonah to land, when cast into the sea, chap. i. 17. So the fire had no power over Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, when thrown into it, but immediately consumed those who were ordered to cast them in, Dan. iii. 22, 27.

3. We shall consider providence, as conversant about intelligent creatures, and more particularly man, the most excellent creature in this lower world. He is, as it were, the peculiar care, and darling of providence; as it has rendered him capable of enjoying the blessings of both worlds, fitted him to glorify God actively, as well as objectively, and governs him in a way suited to his nature, and as one who is designed for greater things, than other creatures below him are capable of. Here we shall consider the providence of God, as ordering the state and condition of men in this world, and then speak more particularly of it, as conversant about the moral actions of men, considered as good or bad.

*First*, To consider the providence of God, as it respects the state and condition of man in this life; and, in particular, what respects not only his natural, but religious interests.

(1.) There is a peculiar care of providence extended towards us, in our birth and infancy. The Psalmist acknowledges this, when he says, *Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts; I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly*, Psal. xxii. 9, 10. Providence has provided the breast, and the most proper food contained therein, for the nourishment of the infant, at its first coming into the world: and it has put those tender bowels into the parents, to whose immediate care they are committed, that, without any arguments, or persuasive motives thereunto, besides what nature suggests, they cannot, unless divested of all humanity, and becoming worse than brutes, neglect and expose it to harm. Thus the prophet says, *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?* Isa. xlix. 15. Therefore, be the parents never so poor, there is something in nature that inclines them rather to suffer themselves, than that the helpless infant should be exposed to suffer through their neglect; which is a peculiar instance of the care of providence. To this we may add, the time, and place in which we were born, or live; the circumstances of our parents, as to what concerns the world, especially if they are such

who are religious themselves, and earnestly desire that their children may become so, and endeavour to promote their spiritual, as well as their temporal welfare. These are all instances of the care of providence.

(2.) We shall now consider the concern of providence for man in his childhood, and advancing years. This discovers itself in furnishing us with natural capacities to receive instruction, which are daily improved, as we grow in years; and, though every one has not an equal degree of parts, fitting him for some station in life, that others are qualified for, yet most are endowed with that degree thereof, as may fit them for the station of life, in which they are placed, so that they may glorify God some way or other, in their generation.

(3.) We shall consider the care of providence, respecting various other ages and conditions of life. It is this that fixes the bounds of our habitation, determines and over-rules the advantages or disadvantages of conversation; the secular callings, or employments, which we are engaged in, together with the issue and success thereof. Again, health and sickness, riches and poverty, the favour or frowns of men; the term of life, whether long or short, all these are under the direction of providence: *One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure,* Job xxi. 23—25. Likewise, as to what respects the injurious treatment we meet with from men; providence is so far concerned about it, as that it sometimes permits it for the trial of our graces; and at other times averts the evil designed against us, by softening their tempers, allaying their resentments; as in the instance of what respected Laban's and Esau's behaviour towards Jacob; or else finds some way to deliver us from the evil intended against us.

(4.) We shall now consider the providence of God, as respecting, more especially, the spiritual concerns of his people. There are some kind foot-steps thereof, that have a more immediate subserviency to their conversion; particularly, their being placed under the means of grace, either bringing the gospel to them, or ordering their abode where it is preached, and that in such a way, as is most adapted to awaken, instruct, convert, or reprove, as means conducive to that great end. Moreover, it is very remarkable in casting our lot, where we may contract friendship and intimacy with those, whose conversation and example may be made of use to us, for our conviction, imitation, and conversion.

And to this let me add, that sometimes there is a peculiar hand of providence, in sending afflictions, which are sanctified, and rendered means of grace, and have a tendency to awaken

men out of their carnal security. This is one way whereby God speaks to man, to *withdraw him from his purpose, and hide pride from him*, Job xxxiii. 14, 17, 19. Sometimes God makes his exemplary judgments, that are abroad in the world, effectual to warn others to flee from the wrath to come. And as for the preaching of the gospel, there is a peculiar hand of providence, sometimes in giving a suitable word, in which case God often over-rules the thoughts and studies of his ministers; so that they are, as it were, directed without their own forethought relating to this event, to insist on such a subject, that God designs to make instrumental for the conversion of souls. This he sets home on the consciences of men, keeps it fixed on the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, and enables them to improve it to his glory in the conduct of their lives.

*Secondly*, We shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about the actions of men. If other creatures are dependent on him, in acting, as well as existing, then certainly man must not be exempted from this dependence. There are several scriptures which speak of intelligent creatures, as under the influence of providence. Thus it is said, *The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will*, Prov. xxi. 1. and elsewhere the prophet says, *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*, Jer. x. 23. that is, he cannot manage himself in the conduct of life, either as an intelligent creature, or as a believer, without supposing the natural or spiritual influence of divine providence.

Now these actions are considered as moral, and so agreeable or contrary to the divine law, in which different respects they are, either good or bad.

(1.) We shall consider the providence of God, as conversant about the good actions of men; and it is so, not only by upholding the powers and faculties of the soul, in acting, or in giving a law, which is the rule thereof; nor is it only conversant about them, in an objective way, or by moral suasion, as affording rational arguments or inducements thereunto, but as implanting and exciting that principle, by which we act; especially, as it respects the work of grace in the souls of men, which is what we call the gracious dispensation of providence, exercised towards men, not barely as intelligent creatures, but as believers. But this we shall not insist on at present, because we shall be led to speak to it under some following answers, which more particularly set forth the grace of God as displayed in the gospel. We are now to consider the actions of men in a more general view; which, when we style them good, it is only as containing in them a less degree of conformity to the



divine law ; but refer the consideration of the goodness of actions, as under the influence of special grace, to its proper place. All that we shall observe at present is, that every thing that is good, in the actions of intelligent creatures, is under the direction and influence of providence. This does not carry the least appearance of a reflection on the divine perfections, while we suppose God to be the Governor of intelligent creatures, acting as such ; and therefore, I presume, it will not be much contested, by any who allow a providence in general. But,

(2.) We shall proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about evil actions. This is a subject which contains in it a very great difficulty ; for we must use the utmost caution, lest we advance any thing that may argue him to be the author of sin ; and yet we are not to suppose that the providence of God is to be wholly excluded from those actions that are sinful ; for there is certainly some meaning in such scriptures as these, when God says, concerning Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart*, Exod. iv. 21. and, *Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him ; for the Lord thy God hardened his heart, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand*, Deut. ii. 30. and elsewhere it is said, concerning Shimei, *The Lord said unto him curse David*, 2 Sam. xvi. 10. and, concerning Joseph's brethren, who sold him into Egypt, it is said, *It was not you that sent me hither, but God*, Gen. xlv. 8. and concerning the false prophets that deceived Ahab, it is said, *The Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets*, 1 Kings xxii. 22. These, and such-like scriptures, are not to be expunged out of the Bible, but explained in a way consistent with the divine perfections ; and nothing can be inferred from them, if this be not, that the providence of God is some way conversant about those actions that are sinful ; but yet it is not in such a way, as either argues him to be the author or approver of sin. (a) Accordingly I would choose to express myself, concerning this matter, to this effect : That the providence of God is conversant about those actions, to which sin is annexed, rather than that it is conversant about sin itself, or the obliquity, or sinfulness thereof. Now, that we may understand this matter, we must distinguish between what is natural, and what is sinful in an action ; the former is from God ; the latter, from ourselves. This is often illustrated by such similitudes as these. The motion of a bowl is from the hand that throws it ; but the irregularity of the motion is from the bias that turns it aside. So the motion of a horse is excited by the whip, or spur of the rider ; but if it goes lame, the defect, or halting that it has in its motion, proceeds from an inward indisposition in the horse, and not from the rider. Others illustrate it by a similitude, taken from the sun's

(a) Vide ante. Vol. I. p. 532, in note.

drawing forth vapours from the earth, by that heat, which has a tendency to exhale them ; but the stench that attends what is exhaled from a dunghill, is not from the sun, but from the nature of the subject from whence it is drawn forth. So the providence of God enables sinners to act in a natural way ; but the sinfulness, irregularity, or moral defects, that attend those actions, is from the corruption of our own nature : or, to speak more plainly, the man that blasphemes, could not think, or utter his blasphemy, without the concurrence of the common providence of God, which enables him to think or speak. These are natural actions ; but that the thoughts, or tongue, should be set against God, or goodness, that is from the depravity of our nature.

Again, to kill, or take away the life of a man, is, in some respects, a natural action, as it cannot be done without thought, or strength to execute what we design. These are the gifts of providence, and, in this respect God concurs to the action. Thus Joab could not have killed Abner, or Amasa, if he had not had a natural power to use the instrument, with which he did it. This was from God ; but the malice, that prompted him to abuse these gifts of providence, and his hypocritical subtilty, and that dissimulation, or disguise of friendship, which gave him an opportunity to execute his bloody design, was from the wickedness of his own heart.

Thus having considered, that the providence of God may be conversant about that which is natural in a sinful action, without reflecting dishonour on him, as the author of sin ; we shall now proceed to consider, in what manner it is conversant about such actions, by which we may better understand the sense of those scriptures, which were but now referred to ; and, I hope, nothing therein will be accounted derogatory to the divine glory, when we observe,

1. That the providence of God may be conversant, in an objective way, about those actions to which sin is annexed, without his being the author, or approver of it. Sin would not be committed, in many instances, if there were not some objects presented, which give occasion thereunto. The object that presents itself may be from God, when the sin, which is occasioned thereby, is from the corruption of our nature. Thus Joseph's brethren would not have thought of killing, or selling him into Egypt, at least, when they did, if he had not obeyed his father's command, in going to deliver his message, and see how it fared with them. Providence ordered his going to enquire of their welfare, and hereby the object was presented to them, which their own corrupt nature inclined them to abuse ; so that, as soon as they saw him, they entered into a conspiracy against him. In the former of these respects, in which the pro-

vidence of God was thus objectively conversant about this action, God is said to have sent Joseph into Egypt; though every circumstance, that was vile and sinful therein, was from themselves.

Again, in the instance before mentioned, of Shimei's cursing David: Providence was conversant about this action, so far, as it ordered that David should come by at that time when Shimei was there, otherwise he would not have cursed him; and when it is said, in the scripture but now mentioned, *The Lord said unto Shimei, Curse David*; the meaning is this; the Lord hath brought me into so low a condition, that the vilest persons, who, before this time, were afraid to open their mouths against me, now take occasion to give vent to their malicious reproaches, as Shimei did; the providence of God was conversant about this action, in an objective way. Now, what it is so conversant about, that, according to the scripture-mode of speaking, God is said to do; as when the man-slayer killed one, through inadvertency, who was presented as an object to him, God is said hereby to *deliver him into his hand*, *Exod. xxi. 13.* yet in all sinful actions, God's presenting the object, does not render him the author of that sin, which is to be ascribed to the corruption of nature, that took occasion to exert itself by the sight of it. This will farther appear, if we consider,

(1.) That such an object might have been presented, and the sinful action not have ensued hereupon: thus the *wedge of gold*, and the *Babylonish garment*, were no temptation to other Israelites, who saw them *among the spoils of Jericho*, as well as Achan, though they were so to him, through the covetousness of his own temper, and the corruption of his nature, that discovered itself, and internally moved him to this sinful action.

(2.) Such objects are not presented by providence, as designing hereby to ensnare, or draw persons to sin, though God knows that they will take occasion to sin thereby; but there are other ends of their being presented, which may be illustrated by a particular instance. God knows, that if the gospel be preached, some will take occasion to reproach it: He orders, notwithstanding, that it shall be preached; not that men might take occasion to do this, but that those, whom he has ordained to eternal life might be converted by it. So our Saviour appeared publickly at the feast of the passover, though he knew that the Jews would put him to death; the end of his going to Jerusalem was not that he might draw forth their corruption, but that he might finish the work, which he came into the world about: He was at that time engaged in his Father's work, but they performed that which they were prompted to do, by satan and their own wicked hearts.

3. When the providence of God is said to be conversant



about sin, it is in suffering or permitting it, not in suggesting, or tempting to it; for no one ought to say, as the apostle James expresses it, *When he is tempted, that he is tempted of God; for God cannot tempt any man*; but, when he is tempted, *he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed*, chap. i. 13, 14. But, so far as the providence of God denies restraining grace, from whence corrupt nature takes occasion to break forth, it is conversant about sin occasionally, not effectually; as when the banks, or flood-gates, that keep the waters within their due bounds, are broken down, by the owner thereof, who does not think fit to repair them, the waters will, according to the course of nature, overflow the country; or if the hedge, or inclosure, that secures the standing corn, be taken away, the beasts, by a propensity of nature, will tread it down, and devour it; so if that which would have a tendency to restrain, or prevent sin, be taken away, it will be committed; and the providence of God may do this, either in a way of sovereignty, or as a punishment for former sins committed, without being charged as the author of sin. It is not the same, in this case, as when men do not prevent sin in others, when it is in their power to do it, since they are under an obligation hereunto: But God is under no obligation to extend this privilege unto sinful men; and sometimes he suffers that wrath, which he will not restrain, to break forth as having a design, some way or other, to glorify himself thereby; as the Psalmist says, *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain*, Psal. lxxvi. 10.

3. The providence of God may be said to be concerned about sin, in over-ruling it for his own glory, and his people's good: In the former instances, it discovers itself, before the sin was committed; but, in this, it is consequent thereunto. This is a wonderful instance of his wisdom, in that, since the sinner obstinately resolves to rebel against him, this shall not tend to lessen, but to illustrate some of his perfections: Thus he over-ruled the wicked action of Joseph's brethren, in their selling him into Egypt, to preserve their lives, in the time of famine; accordingly he says, *God has sent me before you to preserve life*, Gen. xlv. 5. And the vilest action that ever was committed in the world, namely, the crucifying the Lord of glory, was over-ruled, for the saving his people from their sins; and sometimes we read of God's punishing the obstinacy and rebellion of men, by giving courage and success to their enemies against them: Thus Nebuchadnezzar's success in arms against the Jews, was ordered by the providence of God, to punish their idolatry; first, by carrying the greatest part of them captive, and then, when pursuing those who contrary to God's order, fled into Egypt, by destroying or carrying them captive likewise; and,

in doing this, he is called *God's servant*, Jer. xliii. 10. not as though he had any religious regard to the honour and command of God herein; but his design was only to enlarge his dominions, by depriving others of their natural rights; yet God over-ruled this, for the setting forth the glory of his vindictive justice, against a sinful people. And Cyrus, on the other hand, was raised up to be Israel's deliverer from captivity. His success in war, which God designed should be subservient thereunto, is styled, *His girding him*, Isa. xlv. 1, 5. and God promises, that he would *loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates*: And all this was done with a design that he should give liberty to his people; though Cyrus had no more religion, nor real regard to the interest of God in the world, than other kings, who design little else but the satisfying their own ambition; for it is expressly said, *Thou hast not known me*. God did not approve of that corruption, which might give the first occasion to the war, or that injustice that might appear in it: but, notwithstanding, he over-ruled it, to answer the ends of his own glory.

In considering the over-ruling providence of God, in order to the bringing about the ends designed, let it be farther observed; that there are some things which seem to have a more direct tendency thereunto, agreeably to the nature of those second causes, which he makes use of, whereby he gives us occasion to expect the event that will ensue: and, on the other hand, he sometimes brings about some great and valuable ends by those means, which at first view, have no apparent tendency thereunto; but they are over-ruled without, or contrary to the design of second causes, wherein the admirable wisdom of providence discovers itself. Thus those things, which, in all appearance, seem to threaten our ruin, are ordered to subserve our future happiness, though, at present, altogether unexpected. When there was such a dark gloom cast on the world, by the first entrance of sin into it, who would have thought that this should be over-ruled by providence, to give occasion to the display of those divine perfections, which are glorified in the work of our redemption? I do not, indeed, like the expression of an ancient writer, who calls it, *Happy sin!* that gave occasion to man's salvation; but I would rather say, *How admirable was the providence of God, which over-ruled the vilest action to answer so great an end, and brought so much good out of that, which, in itself, was so great an evil!*

We might here give some particular instances of the dispensations of providence, by which God brings good out of evil, in considering those lengths which he hath suffered some men to run in sin, whom he designed, notwithstanding, effectually to call and save: of which the apostle Paul was a very remark-

able instance, who considers this as an expedient, whereby God designed to *shew forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them, that should hereafter believe on Christ to life eternal*; and that men might take encouragement, from hence, to conclude, that *Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15, 16. And the injurious treatment which God's people have met with from their enemies, has sometimes been over-ruled for their good. Thus Ishmael's *mocking*, or, as the apostle calls it, *persecuting Isaac*; and, as is more than probable, not only reproaching him, but the religion which he professed, was over-ruled, by providence, for Isaac's good, when Ishmael was separated from him, which set him out of danger of being led aside by his bad example, as well as delivered him from that uneasiness, which his opposition to him would have occasioned: and it was most agreeable to his future circumstances, whom God designed not only to be the heir of the family, but the propagator of religion in it.

Again, Pharaoh's cruelty, and the methods used to prevent the increasing of the children of Israel in Egypt, was over-ruled by the providence of God, so that they seemed, after this, to be the more immediate care thereof; and it is more particularly remarked in scripture, as an instance of the kind hand of providence towards them, that *the more the Egyptians afflicted them, the more they multiplied, and grew*, Exod. i. 12.

Again, the inhuman and barbarous cruelty of Simeon and Levi, in slaying the Shechemites, Gen. xxxiv. 25. brought on them a curse; and accordingly their father pronounced it, and tells them, that *God would divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*, Gen. xlix. 7. which, in particular, had its accomplishment in Levi's having no distinct inheritance, except those cities that were appointed to them, out of every tribe; but this dividing and scattering them throughout the whole country, was over-ruled by the providence of God, for the good of his people in general; so that this tribe, which God had ordained, *to teach Jacob his judgments, and Israel his law*, Deut. xxxiii. 10. might, through the nearness of their habitation, be conveniently situated among them to answer that end.

We might farther observe, that Saul's unreasonable jealousy and fury, with which he persecuted David, was over-ruled, by providence, for his good; as, in his exile, he had a greater degree of communion with God, than at other times, and, as is more than probable, was inspired to pen the greater number of his Psalms, and was, as it were, trained up for the crown in this school of affliction, and so, more fitted to govern Israel, when God designed to put it on his head.

To this let me add one instance more, and that is, God's suffering the persecuting rage of the Jews to vent itself against



the apostles, when the gospel was first preached by them, which was over-ruled by providence for their scattering, and this for the farther spread thereof, wherever they came ; and the apostle Paul observes, that *his bonds in Christ were not only manifest in all the palace ; and in all other places*, but they were made conducive to the *furtherance of the gospel*, Phil. i. 12, 13. And as for that contention that was between him and Barnabas, at another time, in which each of them shewed that they were but men, subject to like passions and infirmities with others, this seems to have been occasioned by a small and inconsiderable circumstance, yet it rose to such a height, that *they departed one from the other*, Acts xv. 36—40. Each seemed to be over-much tenacious of his own humour ; but providence suffered the corruption of these excellent men to discover itself, and their separation to ensue, that by this means, their ministry might be rendered more extensive, and double service be done to the interest of Christ in different parts of the world.

We might descend to instances of later date, and consider how God suffered the church of Rome to arrive to the greatest pitch of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry ; and wholly to forsake the faith of the gospel, so as to establish the doctrine of merit, and human satisfactions ; and its leaders to be so profanely absurd, as to expose pardons and indulgencies to public sale ; this, providence was over-ruled, for the bringing about the glorious Reformation in Germany. And if it be added, that pride, lust, and covetousness, paved the way for it here in England ; this is no blemish to the Reformation, as the Papists pretend, but a display of the over-ruling providence of God, that brought it about by this means.

I might enlarge on this subject, in considering the providence of God as bringing about wonderful and unexpected changes in the civil affairs of kingdoms and nations, remarkably bringing down some who made the greatest figure in the world, and putting a glory on others raised up out of their ruins ; and how all political affairs have been rendered subservient to answer the ends of the divine glory, with respect to the church in the world, and the deliverances which God has wrought in various ages for it, when it was, in all appearance, upon the brink of ruin, of which we have not only many instances in scripture, but almost every age of the world has given us undeniable proofs of this matter. We might also consider the methods which God has often taken in bringing about his people's deliverance, when, to the eye of reason, it seemed almost impossible, and that, either by dispiriting their enemies, or removing them out of the way, as the Psalmist expresses himself, *The stout-hearted are spoiled ; they have slept their*

*sleep, and none of the men of might have found their hands,* Psal. lxxvi. 5. or else by finding them some other work to do for their own safety and defence. Thus when Saul was pursuing David, in the wilderness of Maon, and had compassed him, and his men round about to take them, there came a messenger to him, saying, *Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land,* 1 Sam. xxiii. 26, 27. And sometimes he softens their spirits, by a secret and immediate touch of providence working a change in their natural temper and disposition. Thus he provided for Jacob's escape from that death that was designed by his brother Esau. And if God intends that they shall fall by the hand of their persecutors, he gives them courage and resolution, together with the exercise of all those graces, which are necessary to support them under, and carry them through the difficulties that they are to undergo. But these things are so largely insisted on, by those who have written professedly on the doctrine of providence,\* that more need not be added on this subject. I shall therefore only consider an objection, or two, that is generally brought against it, by those who pretend to acknowledge that there is a God, but deny his providence.

*Object. 1.* It is objected against the concern of the providence of God, with respect to the smallest things in this world, that they are unworthy of his notice, below his care, and therefore not the objects thereof.

*Ans.* If it was not unbecoming his power, to bring the smallest things into being, or to preserve them from sinking into nothing, then they cannot be excluded from being the objects of his providence. If we consider the whole frame of nature; it cannot be denied, but that some things have a tendency to answer the general design of providence, in a more evident degree than others, and there are many things, the use whereof cannot be particularly assigned by us, otherwise than as they contain a small part of the frame of nature. But to say, that any part thereof is altogether useless, or excluded from being the object of providence, is a reflection on God, as the God of nature. And therefore we must conclude, that all things are some way or other, subject to his providence; and that this is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it redounds to his glory.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, by those who are disposed to cavil at, and find fault with the divine dispensations; that they are not just and equal, because we oftentimes see the righteous afflicted, and the wicked prosper in the world; which is to reproach, if not wholly to deny the doctrine of providence. This is not only done by wicked men, but believers themselves

\* See Charnock, Flatell, Dr. Collings, on Providence.

have sometimes been under a temptation, through the prevalency of corrupt nature, to bring their objections against the equity of providence. Thus the Psalmist says ; *But as for me, my feet were almost gone ; my steps had well nigh slipt. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death : but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men ; neither are they plagued like other men*, Psal. xxiii. 2—5. These are the ungodly, who prosper in the world ; they increase in riches : But as for himself, he says, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency ; for all the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning*, ver. 12—14. and the prophet Jeremiah, when pleading with God concerning his judgments, though he owns, in general, that he was righteous, yet says he, *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously ? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root ; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit ; thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins*, Jer. xii. 1, 2. He could hardly reconcile the general idea which he had of God's justice, with the seeming inequality of the dispensations of his providence ; so the prophet Habakkuk, though he owns that God was *of purer eyes than to behold evil*, and that he *cannot look upon iniquity*, yet he seems to complain in the following words, *Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue, when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he ?* Hab. i. 13. And Job seems to speak very unbecomingly, when he says, *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress ? that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands ? and shine upon the counsel of the wicked ?* Job. x. 3. So that, as the wicked boldly deny a providence, or, at least, reproach it ; others, of a far better character, have, through the prevalency of their unbelief, seemed to detract from the glory thereof.

*Ans<sup>r</sup>.* To this it may be replied, in general, in the apostle's words, *Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God ?* Rom. ix. 20. Is there no deference to be paid to his sovereignty, who has a right to do what he will with his own ? Is his justice to be impeached, and tried at our bar ? Or his wisdom to be measured by our short-sighted discerning of things, who cannot see the end from the beginning of his dispensations ? It is true, good men have been sometimes tempted to question the equity of the distributions of providence, as in the instances but now mentioned ; unless we suppose, that the prophets Habakkuk, Jeremiah, and Job, rather speak the sense of the world, than their own sentiments of things, and desire that God would clear up some dark providences, that wicked men might not



bring their objections against them ; but it may be doubted, whether this be the sense of those scriptures or no. And as for the Psalmist, in the other scripture, it is plain, that he expresses the weakness of his own faith, which was sometimes almost overset ; but, at other times, God condescends to resolve his doubts, and bring him into a better frame, as appears by some following verses. But, that we may give a more particular reply to this objection, let it be considered,

1. That the unequal distribution of things is so far from being a disparagement to any government, that it eminently sets forth the beauty, wisdom, and excellency thereof, and is, in some respects necessary. As it is not fit that every subject should be advanced to the same honour, or that the favour of a prince should be dispensed alike to all ; so it sets forth the beauty of providence, as God is the Governor of the world, that some should more eminently appear to be the objects of his favour than others.

2. The wicked, whose condition is supposed, by those who bring this objection, to be more happy than that of the righteous, will not appear, if things were duly weighed, to be so happy, as they are pretended to be, if we consider the evils that they are exposed to at present, some of which are the immediate result and consequence of sin, whereby they are, as it were, tortured and distracted with contrary lusts and passions, which militate against the dictates of human nature, and render the pleasures of sin less desirable in themselves : But, when we consider those tormenting reflections, which they sometimes have, after the commission thereof, these are altogether inconsistent with peace or happiness, much more if we consider the end thereof, as it leads to everlasting destruction : thus it is said, *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful ; and the end of that mirth is heaviness. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways*, Prov. xiv. 13, 14. Therefore, the good man would not change conditions with him, how destitute soever he may be of those riches, honours, or sensual pleasures, which the other reckons his portion ; *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*, Psal. xxxvii. 26.

3. As for the good man, who is supposed to be in an afflicted condition in this life, we are not, from thence, to conclude him, in all respects, unhappy, for we are to judge of his state by the end thereof. He that looks upon Lazarus, as full of sores, and destitute of many of the conveniences of life, may reckon him unhappy at present, when compared with the condition of the rich man, who is represented in the parable, as *clothed with purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day* : but if we consider him, when leaving the world, as *carried by angels, into Abraham's bosom*, and the other plunged

into an abyss of misery ; no one will see reason to charge the providence of God with any neglect of him, or conclude him to be really miserable, because of his condition in this present life.

Moreover, if we consider the righteous in his most disadvantageous circumstances, as to what respects his outward condition ; we must, notwithstanding, regard him, as an object of divine love, and made partaker of those graces, and inward comforts, which are more than a balance for all his outward troubles ; and therefore we may say of him, as the apostle does of himself, though he be *unknown*, that is obscure, and, as it were, disowned by the world, yet he is *well known*, that is, approved and beloved of God ; does he live an afflicted and *dying* life ? yet he has a better *life*, that is maintained by him : Is he *chastened* ? yet he is *not killed* : Is he *sorrowful* ? yet he always *rejoiceth* : Is he *poor* ? yet he *maketh many rich* ; has he *nothing*, as to outward things ? yet he *possesseth all things*, as he is an heir of eternal life, 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

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QUEST. XIX. *What is God's providence towards the angels ?*

ANSW. God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins to his own glory, and established the rest in holiness and happiness ; employing them all at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

**I**T was observed, in a foregoing answer, that God created all the angels holy ; but, in this, some of them are described as fallen, while the rest retained their first integrity. And the providence of God is considered, as conversant about this matter, in different respects. Accordingly it is said,

I. That God, by his providence, permitted some of the angels to fall. This appears, by the event, because there are some wicked and impure spirits, sunk down into the depths of misery, from that state in which they were created, as the consequence of their rebellion against God.

And inasmuch as it is observed, that it was only a part of the angels that fell, we may infer from thence ; that the dispensation of providence, towards the angels, was different from that which mankind was subject to, when first created, in that one of them was not constituted the head and representative of the rest, in whom they were all to stand or fall ; but the happiness or misery of every one of them was to be the result of his own personal conduct. As their persisting in obedience to God was necessary to their establishment in holiness and happiness, so the least instance of rebellion against him, would

bring inevitable ruin, upon them. Now that which is observed concerning a part of them, is, that they fell into sin and damnation: thus the apostle says, in 2 Pet. ii. 4. *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.*

Their sin, or fall, was wilful; they commenced an open war against their Creator. Herein that enmity to God, and goodness, took its first rise, which has, ever since, been expressed by them, in various instances. Their sin appears to have been wilful, inasmuch as it was committed against the greatest degree of light, for all the angels are described as *excelling in knowledge*; and that subtilty, which is knowledge abused, and depraved with sin, that discovers itself in the fallen angels, argues, that their knowledge, before they fell, was very great, and therefore their rebellion was aggravated in proportion thereunto.

Moreover, they sinned without a tempter, especially those who first took up arms against God. Whether others, by their instigation, might not be induced to sin, we know not\*: But this is certain, that this rebellion was begun without a tempter; for there were no fallen creatures to present a temptation, nor any corruption in their natures that internally drew them aside from God; and therefore their sin might well be styled wilful.

And it may be observed, that the consequence hereof was their irrecoverable ruin. This respects the event of their fall; or that God designed, for ever, to leave them in that sinful and miserable state into which they hereby brought themselves. He might, indeed, have recovered them, as well as sinful man, had he pleased; but he has provided no mediator, no surety, to give satisfaction for them. The blessed Jesus is expressly said, not to have taken *their nature upon him*, thereby to signify that their condition was irretrievable, and their misery to be eternal.

Now it is farther observed, that the providence of God was conversant about their sin and fall, in the same sense in which as it has been before observed, it is conversant about sin in general; which is consistent with his holiness, as well as other perfections, namely, in *permitting, limiting, and ordering* it, and all their other sins, to his own glory.

1. He permitted it. To permit, is not to prevent a sin; and to say that God did not prevent their fall, is to assert a truth which none ever denied, or thought necessary to be proved.

2. It is farther observed, that the providence of God sets bounds and limits to their sin; as it does to the waves of the sea, when he says, *Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther*. How destructive to mankind would the malice of fallen angels be,

\* Some think, that those expressions, which we find in scripture, that speak of the devil, and his angels, and the prince of devils, import as much; but this we pretend not to determine.



were it not restrained? What would not Satan attempt against us, had he an unlimited power? We have a remarkable instance of this in the case of Job. Satan first accused him as a time-serving hypocrite; a mercenary professor, one that did not *fear God for nought*, in chap. i. 9. and how desirous was he that providence would give him up to his will, and take away the hedge of its safe protection? But God would not do this; nevertheless, so far as Satan was suffered, he poured in a confluence of evils upon him, but could proceed no farther. First, he was suffered to plunder him of his substance, and take away his children, by a violent death; but was so restrained, that, *upon himself*, he was not to *put forth his hand*, in ver. 12. Afterwards, he was permitted to touch his person; and then we read of his smiting him with *sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown*, in chap. ii. 7. But yet he was not suffered to take away his life. And, after this the devil's malice still growing stronger against him, he endeavours to weaken his faith, to drive him into despair, and to rob him of that inward peace, which might have given some allay to his other troubles; but yet he is not suffered to destroy his graces, or hurry him into a total apostacy from God. What would not fallen angels attempt against mankind, were not their sin limited by the providence of God!

3. God's providence ordered, or over-ruled, the fall of angels, and all other sins consequent hereupon, to his own glory. Their power, indeed, is great, though limited, as appears by the innumerable instances of those who have been not only tempted, but overthrown; and ruined by them. It may truly be said of them, that *they have cast down many wounded; yea many strong men have been slain by them*. Nevertheless, God over-rules this for his own glory; for from hence he takes occasion to try his people's graces, to give them an humbling sense of the corruption of their nature, and of their inability, to stand in the hour of temptation, without his immediate assistance, and puts them upon imploring help from him, with great importunity; as the apostle Paul did, 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. when the *messenger of Satan was suffered to buffet him*, and God took occasion, at the same time, to display that *grace, which was sufficient for him*, and that *strength, that was made perfect in weakness*, and, in the end, to bruise Satan under his feet, and to make him more than a conqueror over him.

Having thus considered some of the angels, as sinning and falling, it might farther be enquired; whether these all fell at once? And here I cannot but take notice of a very absurd and groundless conjecture of some of the fathers, and others, who of late, have been too much inclined to give into it, namely, that though some of them sinned from the beginning, and

these were the occasion of the sin of our first parents, as all allow ; yet, after this, others, who were appointed to minister to men, were unfaithful in the discharge of their office, and became partners with them in sin ; accordingly they understand that scripture, in which it is said, *The sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all which they chose*, Gen. vi. 2. as though it were meant of angels ;\* whereas nothing is intended thereby but some of the posterity of Seth, who were, before this, professors of the true religion.

There are, indeed, some, of late, who have given into this notion, and strain the sense of that text, in Jude, ver. 6, 7. in which it is said, that *the angels, which kept not their first estate, &c. even as Sodom and Gomorrah, giving themselves over to fornication, are set forth, for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire* ; the meaning of which they suppose to be this ; that, even as the Sodomites were guilty of fornication, and were destroyed, by fire from heaven, for it, so some of the angels were sent down to hell for the same sin : But it is plain the apostle does not here compare the angels and the Sodomites together, as guilty of the same kind of sin, but as both are condemned to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, and are set forth as warnings to presumptuous sinners. Therefore nothing more need be added under this head ; it is enough to say, that this opinion is contrary to the spirituality of the nature of angels ; though there are some ancient writers, who, to give countenance

\* This was the opinion of most of the fathers, in the three first centuries of the church, namely, Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Clemens, Alexandrinus, Lactantius, Ireneus, Cyprian, and others. Some of them appeared to have taken the hint thereof from some MS. of the LXX translation, which rendered the words in Gen. vi. 2. instead of the sons of God, the angels saw the daughters of men, &c. This translation being used by them, instead of the Hebrew text, which they did not well understand ; though others took it from a spurious and fabulous writing, which they had in their hands, called Enoch, or, the prophecy of Enoch, or rather, Liber, *πρὸς ἑννῆς*, de Eggregoris, a barbarous Greek word, used to signify angels, and taken from the character given them of watchers, in Daniel. Of this book, we have some fragments now remaining, in which there is such a ridiculous and fabulous account of this matter, as very much, herein exceeds the apocryphal history of Tobit. It gives an account of a conspiracy among the angels, relating to this matter ; the manner of their entering into it, their names, the year of the world, and place in which this wickedness was committed, and other things, that are unworthy of a grave historian ; and, the reckoning it among those writings, that are supposed to have a divine sanction, is little other than profaneness and blasphemy. Some of the fathers, who refer to this book, pretend it to be no other than apocryphal, and, had they counted it otherwise, all would have reckoned it a burlesque upon scripture ; therefore Origen, who, on other occasions, seems to pay too great a deference to it, when Celsus takes notice of it, as containing a banter on the Christian religion, he is, on that occasion, obliged to reply to him, that book was not in great reputation in the church, Vid. Orig. contra Celsum, Lib. V. And Jerom reckons it among the apocryphal writings, Vid. Hieronym. in Catal. Script. Eccles. cap. 4. And Augustin calls it not only apocryphal, but, as it deserves, fabulous. Vid. ejusd. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XV. cap. 23.

thereunto, have supposed that the angelic spirits were either united to some bodies, or that they assumed them for this purpose; but this is equally absurd, and without any countenance from scripture. Thus concerning the providence of God, as exercised towards the angels that fell. We proceed,

II. To consider providence, as conversant about the rest of the angels, who retained their integrity. Concerning these it is said,

1. That God established them in holiness and happiness. These two privileges are always connected together. It is not said, that they were brought into such a state, or, like man, recovered out of a fallen state, for they are considered, as sinless, or holy angels; nor is it supposed their holiness was increased, since that would be inconsistent with its having been perfect before: That privilege therefore, which providence conferred on them, was the confirming, or establishing them in that state, in which they were created; which bears some resemblance to that privilege, which man would have enjoyed, had he retained his integrity, as he would not only have continued to be holy and happy, so long as he remained innocent; but he would have been so confirmed in it, that his fall would have been prevented: But of this, more in its proper place. The angels, I say, had something like this, which we call the grace of confirmation.

Some have enquired whether this was the result of their yielding perfect obedience for a time, while remaining in a state of probation, pursuant to some covenant, not much unlike that which God made with innocent man; and whether this privilege was the consequence of their fulfilling the condition thereof. But this is to enter too far into things out of our reach; nor is it much for our edification to determine it, though some have asserted, without proving it, while others have supposed them to have been confirmed, when first created, and that herein there was an instance of discriminating grace among the angels; so that they, who fell, were left to the mutability of their wills, whereas they, who stood, had, at the same time, the grace of confirmation.

I might here have been more particular, in considering what this privilege imports, and how it renders the fall of those who are confirmed impossible, and therefore it is a very considerable addition to their happiness: But since we shall have occasion to speak of the grace of confirmation, which man was given to expect in the first covenant under a following answer, and the privileges that would have attended it, had he stood, we shall add no more on that subject in this place; but proceed to prove, that the angels are established and confirmed in holiness and happiness.

This may, in some measure, be argued, from their being



called *elect angels*, 1. Tim. v. 21. If *election*, when applied to men, imports the purpose of God, to confer everlasting blessedness on those who are the objects thereof, and so not only implies that they shall be saved, but that their salvation shall be eternal; why may it not, when applied to angels, infer the eternity of their holiness and happiness, and consequently their being established therein?

Again, this may be also argued, from their coming with Christ, when he shall appear to judge the world; and the joining the saints and angels together in one assembly in heaven: therefore, if the happiness of the one be eternal, that of the other must be so likewise. It is also said, expressly of the angels, that *they always behold the face of God*. And, when we read of the destruction of the church's enemies, the angels are represented as observers of God's righteous judgments; and then it is added, that the punishment inflicted on those, who shall *drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, shall be eternal, and this eternal punishment will be *in the presence of the holy angels*, Rev. xiv. 10, 11. If therefore the duration of the holiness and happiness of the angels, be equal to that of the misery of God's implacable enemies, as both are said to be eternal, this evidently proves that the angels are established in holiness and happiness.

2. It is farther observed, that God employs all the angels, at his pleasure, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice. This leads us to speak concerning the ministry of angels, which is either extraordinary, or ordinary. Most of the instances which we have thereof, especially in the Old Testament, were performed in an extraordinary manner, and sometimes attended with their appearance in a human form, assumed for that purpose: This may be briefly considered; and then we shall enquire, whether, though their ministry be not visible, or attended with those circumstances, as it formerly was, there are not some other instances, in which the providence of God now employs them for the good of his church. As to the former of these, we read that God has sometimes sent them to supply his servants with necessary food, when destitute thereof, and there was no ordinary way for their procuring it: Thus an angel brought *a cake, and a cruse of water*, to Elijah, when he was on his journey to Horeb, *the mount of God*, 1. Kings xix. 5—8. And when Abraham's servant was travelling to Mesopotamia, to bring a wife from thence for Isaac, Abraham tells him, that *God would send his angel before him*, Gen. xxi. 7. and so make his journey prosperous.

Again, the angels have sometimes been sent to defend God's people, and to assure them of safety, when exposed to danger: Thus, when Jacob was returning from Laban to his own country, and was apprehensive of the danger that he was exposed

to, from the resentment of his brother Esau, it is said, that *the angels of God met him; and, when he saw them, he said, This is God's host*, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. And when the prophet Elijah was encompassed about by the Syrian army, sent on purpose to take him, he was defended by an host of angels appearing under the emblem of *horses and chariots of fire round about him*, 2 Kings vi. 15—17. Others, when persecuted, and, as it were, delivered over to death, have been preserved, by the ministry of angels, as Daniel was, when cast into the *lion's den*, Dan. vi. 22. Others have been released from their chains, and the prison doors opened by them; as Peter, and the rest of the apostles were, Acts xii. 17. compared with chap. v. 19.

Again, sometimes they have been employed to deliver messages, and give the prophets an extraordinary intimation of future events; as the angel Gabriel did to Daniel, Dan. viii. 16: And an angel was sent to Zacharias, to foretel the birth of his son, *John the Baptist*, Luke i. 13.

Moreover, the angels of God have sometimes been employed to give a check to his enemies, when they have attempted any thing against his church: Thus the angel met Balaam in the way, when he was riding to seek enchantments against Israel, *his way being perverse before God*, Numb. xxii. 32. And another angel was sent, as a minister of God's justice, in bringing the pestilence on Israel, for David's numbering the people, who appeared *with his hand stretched out upon Jerusalem to destroy it*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 16. and afterwards withdrew his hand, when God told him, *It is enough, and that it repented him of the evil*. And to this we may add, that the angels shall be employed, at last, in gathering together the elect, from the four winds, that they may appear before Christ's tribunal. These, and many other instances to the like purpose, are mentioned, in scripture, to set forth the extraordinary ministry of angels.

There are also other instances, in which, though miracles are ceased, the angels are employed to perform some works in the hand of providence for God's people: Thus there are some promises, which seem to be applied to the church in all ages, of blessings, which should be conferred by their ministry; as when it is said, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone*, Psal. xci. 11, 12. which scripture, though it may have a particular reference to their ministry to our Saviour, yet it seems to be applicable also to his people; and that promise, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them*, Psal. xxxiv. 7. is applicable to them in all ages, as well as that in which it is said, concerning the ministry of angels to infants, that *in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven*, Matt. xviii. 10.

Moreover, the ministry of angels to dying saints, who are, according to what our Saviour says in the parable, *carried*, by them, *into Abraham's bosom*, Luke xvi. 22. is universally true of all saints. And it is expressly said, with a peculiar application to the gospel-dispensation, that the angels are *all ministring spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb. i. 14. so that though their ministry, as to many circumstances thereof, differ from what it was of old, there being nothing miraculous now attending it, as formerly there was; yet it remains an undoubted truth, that they are, and have been, in all ages, made use of, by the providence of God, in the administration of his power, mercy, and justice.

I shall conclude this head with a few cautions relating to this matter, as this doctrine is not to be laid down without certain restrictions, or limitations; therefore,

1. We must take heed, notwithstanding what has been said concerning the ministry of angels, that we don't take occasion hereby to set aside the immediate influence, or concern of the providence of God, for his church; for whatever may be ascribed to angels, as second causes, our principal regard must be to him, whose ministers they are; neither are we to entertain the least thought, as though God had committed the government of the world, or the church, to them; which the apostle expressly denies, when he says, *Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come*, Heb. ii. 5. therefore,

2. The praise and glory of all their ministry is not to be ascribed to them, but to him, who makes use of them; nor are we to pretend, at all times, to determine, that this or that particular dispensation of providence is by the immediate hand of God, and another by the ministry of angels; since it is enough for us to say, that though God does not need their assistance, yet he sometimes sets forth the sovereignty of his providence, and evinces his right to employ all his creatures at his pleasure, as well as gives an additional instance of his care of his churches, by employing them in extraordinary services for their good; though we cannot, at all times, distinguish between what is done by the immediate hand of God, and other things performed by their ministry.

3. Whatever we assert, concerning the ministry of angels, we must take heed that we do not regard them as objects of divine worship, or exercise that dependence on, or give that glory to them, which is due to God alone. Nor are we to suppose, that God employs them in those works that are the effects of his supernatural or almighty power, in which he deals with the hearts of his people, in a way more immediately conducive to their conversion and salvation.



QUEST. XX. *What was the providence of God toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

ANSW. The providence of God toward man, in the estate wherein he was created, was, the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth, putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help, affording him communion with himself, instituting the Sabbath, entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience; of which, the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

**I**N this answer, we have an account of the providence of God, as respecting the *outward*, and the *spiritual*, concerns of man.

I. As to what respects his outward estate, we have an account,

1. Of God's fixing the place of his abode, which was to be in paradise, a very large and most delightful garden, of God's own planting, an *epitome* of all the beauties of nature, which, as it were, presented to his view the whole world in miniature; so that herein he might, without travelling many miles, behold the most beautiful land-skip which the world afforded, and partake of all the fruits, with which it was stored. The whole world, indeed, was given him for a possession; but this was, as it were, a store-house of its choicest fruits, and the peculiar seat of his residence.

We find the word *paradise* used, in scripture, sometimes to signify a delightful garden, and sometimes it is taken, in a metaphorical sense, to signify *heaven*, Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. xii. 4. Rev. ii. 7. by which application thereof, we may conclude, that this earthly paradise, in which man was placed, was a kind of type of the heavenly blessedness, which, had he retained his integrity, he would have been possessed of, and which they, who are saved by Christ, shall be brought to.

Here we may take notice of the conjectures of some ancient and modern writers concerning it, more especially as to what respects that part of the world wherein it was situate; and whether it is now in being, or to be found in any part of it, at this day. Many have given great scope to their conception about the situation of paradise, and some conjectures are so absurd, that they hardly deserve to be mentioned. As,

(1.) Some have thought that it was situate in some place, superior to, and remote from this globe of the earth, in which we live; but they have not the least shadow of reason for this supposition, and nothing can be more contrary to the account we have thereof in scripture.

(2.) Others fancy, that there was really no such place, but that the whole account we have thereof, in Gen. ii. is allegorical; thus Origen, Philo, and some modern writers: but no one can justly suppose this, who duly weighs the historical account we have of it, in scripture, with that sobriety and impartiality that he ought; for, according to this method of reasoning, we may turn any thing into an allegory, and so never come to any determinate sense of scripture, but what the wild fancies of men suggest.

(3.) Others have supposed, that the whole world was one great garden, or paradise, and that when man was placed therein, it was so described, to signify the beauties of nature, before they were lost, by the curse consequent on sin: But this cannot be true, because God first made man, and then *planted this garden*, and afterwards *put him into it*; Gen. ii. 8. and after the fall, *he drove him out of it*, chap. iii. 24. But, passing by these groundless conjectures, something may be determined, with more certainty, concerning the situation thereof, and more agreeable to scripture; therefore,

(4.) It was situate in Mesopotamia, near Babylon, to the north-east end of the land of Canaan. This appears,

1st, From the country adjacent to it, which is called Eden, out of which the river that watered it is said to proceed, chap. ii. 10. This country was afterwards known by the same name, and is elsewhere reckoned among those that the king of Assyria had conquered, Isa. xxxvii. 12.

2dly, Two of the rivers, that proceeded from Eden, which watered paradise, were well known in after-ages, *viz.* Hiddekel, or Tigris, and Euphrates, especially the latter, of which we often read in scripture; and it is certain they were in Mesopotamia; therefore the garden of Eden was there. And, as it was the finest plantation in the world, this was one of the most pleasant climates therein, not situate too far northward, so as to be frozen up in winter; nor too near the equator southward, so as to be scorched with excessive heat in summer; this was the place of man's residence at first. (a)

But if any are so curious in their enquiries, as to desire to know the particular spot of ground in which it was; that is not to be determined. For though the place where paradise was, must still be in being, as much as any other part of the world; yet there are no remains of it, that can give any satisfaction to the curiosity of men, with relation thereunto; for it is certain, that it was soon destroyed as a garden, partly by the flaming sword, or stream of fire, which was designed to guard the way of the tree of life, that man might no more come to it; and

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(a) Vide Dr. Wells' *Sacred Geography*, and the excursions annexed to it.

thereby to signify, that it ceased to be an ordinance, for his faith concerning the way in which eternal life was to be obtained. And it is more than probable, that this stream of fire, which is called a flaming sword, destroyed, or burnt up, this garden ; and, besides this, the curse of God, by which the earth brought forth briars and thorns, affected this, as well as other parts of the world ; so that, by reason thereof, and for want of culture, it soon lost its beauty, and so could not well be distinguished from the barren wilderness. And to this let me add, that since the flood, the face of the earth is so altered, that it is a vain thing for travellers to search for any traces thereof, or to pretend to determine, within a few miles, the place where it was.

Having considered the place of man's abode, to wit, paradise, we have,

2. An account of his secular employment therein. He was appointed to dress, or manure it ; from whence we may take occasion to observe, that a secular employment is not inconsistent with perfect holiness, or a person's enjoying communion with God, and that blessedness which arises from it : but, on the other hand, it may be reckoned an advantage, inasmuch as it is a preservative against idleness, and those temptations that oftentimes attend it. Notwithstanding, though man was employed in this work, it was performed without that labour, fatigue, and uneasiness, which now attends it, or those disappointments, and perplexities, which men are now exposed to, whose secular callings are a relief against poverty, and a necessary means for their comfortable subsistence in the world, which had not man fell, would not have been attended with those inconveniences that now they are, as the consequence of that curse, which sin brought with it ; as it is said, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*, Gen. iii. 19.

3. We have a farther account of the provision that providence made for man's subsistence ; the great variety of fruits, which the earth produced, were given him for food, the tree of knowledge of good and evil only excepted. From whence we may observe, the difference between the condition of man in paradise, and that of the saints in heaven, in which the bodies of men shall be supported, without food, when changed and adapted to such a way of living, as is inconsistent with this present state ; which seems to be the meaning of that expression of the apostle, *Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats ; but God shall destroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. vi. 13.

Here we may take occasion to enquire, whether the fruits of the earth were the only food which man lived on, not only before the fall, but in several following ages ? or, whether flesh was eaten before the flood ? It seems most agreeable to the dictates of nature, to suppose, that he would never have found



out such an expedient, as killing the beasts, and eating their flesh to subsist him, had he not received an express direction to do it from God, which rendered it a duty. And we have a particular intimation of this grant given to Noah, after the deluge, when God says, *Every moving thing that liveth*, namely, every clean beast, *shall be meat for you*, Gen. ix. 3. from whence some conclude, that there was no flesh eaten before this; and that the distinction, which we read of, concerning clean and unclean beasts, which Noah brought with him into the ark, respected either such as were fit or unfit for sacrifice; or the clean beasts were such as God afterwards designed for food; and therefore there is a kind of prolepsis in their being called clean at that time.

The principal reason that induces some to suppose this, is, because we read, in the scripture but now mentioned, that when God directed Noah, and his posterity, to eat flesh, and considered this as a peculiar gift of providence, he said, *Even as the green herb have I given you all things*; that is, as when I created man at first, *I gave him every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, that it should be to him for meat*; but now *have I given you all things*, Gen. i. 29. that is, have made a considerable addition to your food by giving you a liberty to feed on flesh; where the manner of expression seems to intimate, that, in this respect, man's food differed from what it was before. This conjecture, for that is the most that I can call it, seems, to me, to have equal, if not greater, probability in it, than the contrary, which is the commonly received opinion relating hereunto; and, if it be true, then we may observe, if we compare the food, by which man subsisted, with the length of his life, in the first ages of the world, that the most simple diet is the most wholesome; when men become slaves to their appetites, and pamper themselves with variety of meats, they do, as it were, dig their own graves, and render their lives shorter, than they would be, according to the common course of nature.

If it be objected to this, that man's not feeding on flesh, was such a diminution of his happiness, that it seems inconsistent with a state of innocency. To this it may be answered, that for man to feed on what the earth produced, was no mortification or unhappiness, to him; especially if it were, by a peculiar blessing of providence, adapted to, as well as designed for his nourishment, as being his only food; in which case none of those consequences would ensue, which would now attend a person's being wholly confined thereto. If this way of living was so far from destroying, or weakening the constitution of men, that it tended, by the peculiar blessing of God, not only

to nourish, but to maintain health, and was medicinal, as well as nourishing, and so conducive to long life ; and if the fruits of the earth, before that alteration, which they might probably sustain by the deluge, or, at least, before the curse of God was brought upon the earth by man's sin, differed vastly from what they now are, both as to the pleasantness of their taste, and their virtue to nourish ; if these things are supposed, it cannot be reckoned any degree of unhappiness, though man, at this time, might have no other food, but what the earth produced : But this I reckon among the number of those probable conjectures, concerning which it is not very material to determine, whether they are true or false.

4. God gave man dominion over all creatures in this world, or, as it is expressed, he *put them under his feet*, Psal. viii. 6. which not only argues a superiority of nature, but a propriety in, and liberty to use them, to the glory of God, and his own advantage. No creature was in itself a snare to him, or a necessary occasion of sin ; for as the creature at first, to use the Apostles phrase, was not liable to *the bondage of corruption*, so it was not *subject to vanity*, Rom. viii. 20, 21. by an inclination that he had in his nature to abuse it. And as for those creatures which are now formidable to man, as the lion, the tyger, &c. these, as it is more than probable, had not that fierceness in their nature, before the fall of man, and the curse consequent thereupon, so that our first parents could make as much use of them, and had them as much under their command, as we have the tamest creatures. And it is not improbable, that they did not prey upon, and devour one another, as now they do, since providence provided the produce of the earth *for their food*, Gen. i. 30. and therefore, by a natural instinct, they sought it only from thence ; so that the beasts devouring one another, as well as their being injurious to man, is a standing mark of the curse of God, which was consequent on sin.

We read of a time in which the church is given to expect, that *the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock, and dust shall be the serpent's meat ; they shall not hurt, nor destroy, in all God's holy mountain*, Isa. lxxv. 25. which, if it shall be literally accomplished, is an intimation that it was so at first, as it contains a prediction of the restoring of this part of nature, in some respects, to its first estate. But, supposing it only to be a metaphorical description of the church's happy state in future ages ; the prophet's using this metaphor, argues the possibility of the thing's being literally true, and that it is a consequence of man's fallen state that it is not so now, therefore it is probable, that it was otherwise at first. Such conjectures as these may be excused, if we dont pretend

them to be articles of faith, nor think it worth our while to contend with those who deny them.

5. It is farther observed, that God ordained marriage for man's help, and that not only in what concerns the conveniences of this life, but as a means to promote his spiritual welfare, as such a nearness of relation lays the strongest obligations to it; and also that the world might be increased, without any sinful expedient conducive thereunto; and herein there was a standing precedent to be observed by mankind, in all succeeding ages, that hereby the unlawfulness of polygamy, and other violations of the seventh commandment, might evidently appear \*.

II. We proceed to consider the providence of God, as conversant about man's spiritual concerns, and that in three respects, namely, in granting him communion with himself, in instituting the Sabbath, and entering into a covenant of life with him.

1. Man, in the estate in which he was created, was favoured with communion with God: This supposes a state of friendship, and is opposed to estrangement, separation, or alienation from him; and, as the result hereof,

(1.) God was pleased to manifest his glory to him, and that not only in an objective way, or barely by giving him a conviction, that he is a God of infinite perfection, which a person may have, who is destitute of communion with him: but he displayed his perfections in such a manner to him, so as to let him see his interest therein, and that, as long as he retained his integrity, they were engaged to make him happy.

(2.) This communion was attended with access to God, without fear, and a great delight in his presence; for man, being without guilt, was not afraid to draw nigh to God; and, being without spot, as made after his image, he had no shame, or confusion of face, when standing before him, as a holy, sin-hating God.

(3.) It consisted in his being made partaker of those divine influences, whereby he was excited to put forth acts of holy obedience to, and love and delight in him, which were a spring and fountain of spiritual joy.

Nevertheless, though this communion was perfect in its kind, as agreeable to the state in which he was at first, yet it was not so perfect, as to degree, as it would have been, had he continued in his integrity, till he was possessed of those blessings, which would have been the consequence thereof; for then the soul would have been more enlarged, and made receptive of greater degrees of communion, which he would have enjoyed in heaven. He was, indeed, at first, in a holy and happy state, yet he



was not in heaven, and, though he enjoyed God, it was in ordinances, and not in an immediate way, and accordingly it was necessary for him constantly to address himself to him, for the maintenance of that spiritual life, which he had received, together with his being; and this was not inconsistent with a state of innocency, any more than the maintenance of our natural lives, by the use of proper food, is inconsistent with health, or argues an infirm, or sickly constitution, or any need of medicine to recover it; yet our lives would be more confirmed, and, if we may so express it, less precarious, if God had ordained that they should have been supported without these means.

This may serve to illustrate the difference that there is between the happiness that the saints enjoy, in God's immediate presence in heaven, and that which is expected, as the result of our daily access to him, in ordinances, wherein we hope for some farther degree of communion with him; the former of these man would have attended to, had he stood; the latter contained in it, that state in which he was in innocency: but inasmuch as there can be no communion with God, but what has a proportionable degree of delight and pleasure attending it; this our first parents may be said to have experienced, which contributed to the happiness of that state in which they were, though this joy was not so complete, as that is which they are possessed of, who have not only an assurance of the impossibility of losing that communion, which they have with God at present, but are arrived to a state of perfect blessedness.

2. God sanctified and instituted the Sabbath for man's more immediate access to him, and, that he might express his gratitude for the blessings he was made partaker of, and might have a recess from that secular employment, which, as was before observed, he was engaged in. This was therefore a great privilege; and, indeed, the Sabbath was a pledge, or shadow, of an everlasting Sabbath, which he would have enjoyed in heaven, had he not forfeited, and lost it, by his fall. But we shall have occasion to speak more particularly to this head under the fourth commandment;\* and therefore all that we shall add, at present, is, that the Sabbath was instituted as a day of rest for man, even while he remained in a state of innocency. This appears from its being blessed and sanctified, upon the occasion of God's resting from his work of creation; therefore it was, at that time, set apart to be observed by him.

*Object.* 1. It is objected, that it might then be sanctified with this view, that man should observe it after his fall, or, in particular, at that time when the observation of it was enjoined.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that there never was any ordinance instituted, but what was designed to be observed by

man, immediately after the institution thereof. Now the sanctification of the Sabbath imports as much as its institution, or setting apart for a holy use; therefore we cannot but suppose, that God designed that it should be observed by man in innocency.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, that it is inconsistent with the happy state, in which man was created, for God to appoint a day of rest for him, to be then observed; for rest supposes labour, and therefore is more agreeable to that state into which he brought himself by sin, when, by the sweat of his brow, he was to eat bread.

*Ans.* Though it is true, man, in innocency, was not exposed to that uneasiness and fatigue that attended his employment after his fall, neither was the work he was engaged in a burthen to him, so as that he needed a day of rest to give him ease, in that respect; yet a cessation from a secular employment, attended with a more immediate access to God in his holy institutions, wherein he might hope for a greater degree of communion with him, was not inconsistent with that degree of holiness and happiness, in which he was created, which, as was before observed, was short of the heavenly blessedness; so that, though heaven is a state, in which the saints enjoy an everlasting Sabbath, it does not follow that man, how happy soever he was in paradise, was so far favoured therein, as that a day of rest was inconsistent with that state.

3. We shall proceed to enquire how the providence of God had a more immediate reference to the spiritual or eternal happiness of man, in that he entered into a covenant of life with him, under which head we are to consider the personal concerns of our first parents therein. (a)

(a) If there had been a period in which there was absolutely no existence, there would never have been any thing. Either man, or his Creator, or one more remote, has been from eternity, unless we admit the contradiction of an eternal succession. But because to create implies power and wisdom, which we have not the least reason to imagine any creature can possess, either man, and the world he possesses, have always been, or their maker. The history of man, the structure of languages, the face of the ground, &c. shew that man and his habitation have not been from eternity; therefore God is eternal. As all excellency is in himself, or derived from him, his happiness depends only on himself; and the worlds he has made, are so far pleasing as they exhibit himself to himself. He could have made his intelligent creatures all confirmed in holiness, but he chose to confer liberty, which was a blessing till abused. He knew all the consequences, and that these would exercise his mercy and justice. Partial evil he determined should produce universal good, and that no evil should take place, but that which should eventually praise him.

The first intelligent creatures were purely spiritual, and each stood or fell for himself. He united in man the spiritual and corporeal natures; he formed his soul innocent and holy, and made ample provision for the comfort of his body; and as it would have been inconvenient to have brought all of the human family, which were to be in every generation, upon the earth at one time, and still more

(1.) The dispensation they were under was that of a covenant. This is allowed by most, who acknowledge the imputation of Adam's sin, and the universal corruption of nature, as consequent thereupon. And some call it, a *covenant of innocency*, inasmuch as it was made with man while he was in a state of innocency; others call it, a *covenant of works*, because perfect obedience was enjoined, as the condition of it, and so it is opposed to the covenant of grace, as there was no provision made therein for any display of grace, as there is in that covenant which we are now under; but, in this answer, it is called the *covenant of life*, as having respect to the blessings promised therein.

It may seem indifferent to some, whether it ought to be termed a covenant, or a law of innocency; and, indeed, we would not contend about the use of a word, if many did not design, by what they say, concerning its being a law, and not properly a covenant, to prepare the way for the denial of the imputation of Adam's sin; or did not, at the same time, consider him as no other than the natural head of his posterity, which, if it were to be allowed, would effectually overthrow the doctrine of original sin, as contained in some following answers. Therefore we must endeavour to prove that man was not barely under a law, but a covenant of works; and, that we may proceed with more clearness, we shall premise some things, in general, concerning the difference between a law and a covenant.

so, that, every one standing or falling for himself, the earth should be the common habitation of beings perfectly holy, happy, and immortal, and also of cursed perishing beings, he constituted the first man a representative of his race. "Let us make *man*," the race in one. To be fruitful, multiply, fill, and subdue the earth, were directed to the race. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die." He did die spiritually, he lost his innocence, became the subject of guilt, shame, and fear; and all his posterity inherit the fallen nature. Being already cursed, when afterwards arraigned and sentenced, it was only necessary to curse his enjoyments in this world. His posterity were included, for they are subjected to the same afflictions and death. If they had not been included in the sentence "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," as they were a part of his dust, not dying, it would not have been accomplished. That he represented the race appears also from this, that the command was given to him before his wife was formed, and also because it does not appear that her eyes were opened to see her guilt, and miserable condition until he had eaten of the fruit; then "the eyes of them both were opened."

The remedy was provided before the creation, and nothing can be shown to prove that it is not complete in every instance when there is not actual guilt. That the woman was to have a seed the first parent heard announced in the sentence against the tempter, whilst standing in suspense momentarily in expectation of that death which had been threatened. If the plural had been used, this could have been no intimation of the seed Christ. Why was the word *woman* used, which excludes the man, and not the term *man*, which would have embraced both, unless the Son of the virgin was intended? It is all one great whole, perfectly seen only to God himself. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."



A law is the revealed will of a sovereign, in which a debt of obedience is demanded, and a punishment threatened, in proportion to the nature of the offence, in case of disobedience. And here we must consider, that as a subject is bound to obey a law ; so he cannot justly be deprived of that which he has a natural right to, but in case of disobedience ; therefore obedience to a law gives him a right to impunity, but nothing more than this ; whereas a covenant gives a person a right, upon his fulfilling the conditions thereof, to all those privileges, which are stipulated, or promised therein. This may be illustrated, by considering it as applied to human forms of government, in which it is supposed that every subject is possessed of some things, which he has a natural or political right to, which he cannot justly be deprived of, unless he forfeit them by violating the law, which, as a subject, he was obliged to obey ; therefore, though his obedience give him a right to impunity, or to the undisturbed possession of his life and estate, yet this does not entitle him to any privilege, which he had no natural right to. A king is not obliged to advance a subject to great honours, because he has not forfeited his life and estate by rebellion : but in case he had promised him, as an act of favour, that he would confer such honours upon him, upon condition of his yielding obedience in some particular instances, then he would have a right to them, not as yielding obedience to a law, but as fulfilling the conditions of a covenant.

This may be farther illustrated, by considering the case of Mephibosheth. He had a natural and legal right to his life and estate, which descended to him from his father Jonathan, because he behaved himself peaceably, and had not rebelled against David ; but this did not entitle him to those special favours which David conferred upon him, such as *eating bread at his table continually*, 2 Sam. ix. 13. for those were the result of a covenant between David and Jonathan ; in which David promised, that he would shew kindness to his house after him. Now, to apply this to our present case, if we consider our first parents only as under a law, their perfect obedience to it, it is true, would have given them a right to impunity, since punishment supposes a crime ; therefore God could not, consistently with his perfections, have punished them, had they not rebelled against him. I do not say, that God could not, in consistency with his perfections, have taken away the blessings that he conferred upon them, as creatures, in a way of sovereignty, but this he could not do as a judge ; so that man would have been entirely exempted from punishment, as long as he had stood. But this would not, in the least, have entitled him to any superadded happiness, unless there had been a promise made, which gave him ground to expect it, in case he yielded

obedience ; and if there were, then that dispensation, which before contained the form of a law, having this circumstance added to it, would afterwards contain the form of a covenant, and so give him a right to that super-added happiness promised therein, according to the tenor of that covenant. Therefore, if we can prove (which we shall endeavour to do, before we dismiss this subject) not only that man was obliged to yield perfect obedience, as being under a law ; but that he was given to expect a super-added happiness, consisting either in the grace of confirmation in his present state, or in the heavenly blessedness ; then it will follow, that he would have had a right to it, in case of yielding that obedience, according to the tenor of this dispensation, as containing in it the nature of a covenant.

This I apprehend to be the just difference between a law and a covenant, as applicable to this present argument, and consequently must conclude, that the dispensation man was under, contained both the ideas of a law and a covenant : his relation to God, as a creature, obliged him to yield perfect obedience to the divine will, as containing the form of a law ; and this perfect obedience, had it been performed, would have given him a right to the heavenly blessedness, by virtue of that promise, which God was pleased to give to man in this dispensation, as it contained in it the nature of a covenant. And this will farther appear, when we consider,

(2.) The blessing promised in this covenant, namely, life. This, in scripture, is used sometimes to signify temporal, and, at other times, spiritual and eternal blessings : we have both these senses joined together in the apostle's words, where we read of *the life that now is, and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Moreover, sometimes life and blessing, or blessedness, are put together, and opposed to death, as containing in it all the ingredients of evil, Deut. xxx. 19. in which scripture, when Moses exhorts them to choose life, he doth not barely intend a natural life, or outward blessings, for these there is no one but chooses, whereas many are hardly persuaded to make choice of spiritual life.

In this head we are upon, we consider life, as including in it, both spiritual and eternal blessedness ; so it is to be understood, when our Saviour says, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life* ; Matt. vii. 14. and elsewhere, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, chap. xix. 17. We must therefore conclude, that Adam having such a promise as this made to him, upon condition of perfect obedience, he was given to expect some privileges, which he was not then possessed of, which included in them the enjoyment of the heavenly blessedness ; therefore this dispensation, that he was under, may well be called a covenant of life.

But, since this is so necessary a subject to be insisted on, we shall offer some arguments to prove it. Some have thought that it might be proved from Hos. vi. 7. which they choose to render, *They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant*; from whence they conclude, that Adam was under a covenant; and so they suppose that the word Adam is taken for the proper name of our first parent, as it is probable it is elsewhere, viz. when Job says, *If I covered my transgressions, as Adam*, Job xxxi. 33. alluding to those trifling excuses which Adam made, to palliate his sin, immediately after his fall, Gen. iii. 12. And there are some expositors who conclude, that this is no improbable sense of this text:\* yet I would not lay much stress on it; because the words may be rendered as they are in our translation, *They, like men*, &c. *q. d.* according to the custom of vain man, they have *transgressed the covenant*; or, they are no better than the rest of mankind, who are disposed to break covenant with God. In the same sense the apostle uses the words, when reproving the Corinthians, he says, *Are ye not carnal, and walk as men*, 1 Cor. iii. 3.

Therefore, passing this by, let us enquire, whether it may not, in some measure, be proved from that scripture, which is often brought for this purpose, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17. from whence it is argued, that, if man had retained his integrity, he would have been made partaker of the heavenly blessedness. Many, indeed, are so far from thinking this an argument to prove this matter, that they bring it as an objection against it, as though God had given man hereby to understand, that he was not, pursuant to the nature of a covenant, to expect any farther degree of happiness than what he was already possessed of; but, agreeably to the sanction of a law, death was to be inflicted, in case of disobedience; and life, that is, the state in which he was created, should be continued, as long as he retained his integrity. As when a legislator threatens his subjects with death, in case they are guilty of rebellion, nothing can be inferred from thence, but that, if they do not rebel, they shall be continued in the quiet possession of what they had a natural right to, as subjects, and not that they should be advanced to a higher degree of dignity. This sense of the text, indeed, enervates the force of the argument, taken from it, to prove, that man was under a covenant. But yet I would not wholly give it up, as containing in it nothing to support the argument we are defending. For this threatening was denounced, not only to signify God's will to punish sin, or the certain event that should follow upon

\* Vid. Grot. in Hos. vi. 7. *Mihi latina hæc interpretatio non displicet, ut sensus hic sit; sicut Adam, quia pactum meum violavit, expulsus est ex Hede; ita æquum est ex sua terra expelli.*



it, but as a motive to obedience ; and therefore it includes in it a promise of life, in case he retained his integrity.

The question therefore is ; what is meant by this life ? or, whether it has any respect to the heavenly blessedness ? In answer to which, I see no reason to conclude but that it has ; since that is so often understood by the word *life* in scripture : thus it is said, *Hear and your soul shall live*, Isa. lv. 3. and, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, Matt. xix. 17. and in many other places ; therefore why should not *life*, in this place, be taken in the same sense ? So, on the other hand, when death is threatened, in several scriptures it implies a privation of the heavenly blessedness, and not barely a loss of those blessings, which we are actually possessed of.

Moreover, Adam could not but know God to be the Fountain of blessedness, otherwise he would have been very defective in knowledge ; and, when he looked into himself, he would find that he was capable of a greater degree of blessedness, than he did at present enjoy, and (which was yet more) he had a desire thereof implanted in his very nature. Now what can be inferred from hence, but that he would conclude that God, who gave him these enlarged desires, after some farther degree of happiness arising from communion with him, would give him to expect it, in case he retained that holiness, which was implanted in his nature ?

But, that it may farther appear that our first parents were given to expect a greater degree of happiness, and consequently that the dispensation, that they were under, was properly federal, let it be considered ; that the advantages which Christ came into the world to procure for his people, which are promised to them, in the second covenant, are, for substance,\* the same with those which man would have enjoyed, had he not fallen ; for *he came to seek and to save that which was lost*, and to procure the recovery of forfeited blessings. But Christ came into the world to purchase eternal life for them ; therefore this would have been enjoyed, if there had been no need of purchasing it, viz. if man had retained his integrity.

The apostle, speaking of the end of Christ's coming into the world, observes, Gal. iii. 13, 14. not only, that it was to *redeem us from the curse*, or the condemning sentence of the law, but that his redeemed ones might be made partakers of the *blessing of Abraham*, which was a very comprehensive one, including in it, that God would be *his God, his shield, and exceeding great reward*, Gen. xvii. 7. compared with chap. xv.

\* *When I speak of the advantages being, for substance the same, it is supposed, that there are some circumstances of glory, in which that salvation that was purchased by Christ, differs from that happiness which Adam would have been possessed of, had he persisted in his integrity.*

1. and the same apostle elsewhere speaks of Christ's having *redeemed them that were under the law*, that is, the curse of the violated law, or covenant, *that we might receive the adoption of sons*, Gal. iv. 4, 5. that is, that we might be made partakers of all the privileges of God's children, which certainly include in them eternal life.

Again, there is another scripture that farther supports this argument, taken from Rom. viii. 3, 4. *What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*; which is as though he should say, according to the tenor of the first covenant, eternal life was not to be expected, since it was become weak, or could not give it, because man could not yield perfect obedience, which was the condition thereof: But God's sending his own Son to perform this obedience for us, was an expedient for our attaining that life, which we could not otherwise have enjoyed. This seems to be the general scope and design of the apostle in this text; and it is agreeable to the sense of many other scriptures, that speak of the advantages that believers attain by Christ's death, as compared with the disadvantages which man sustained by Adam's fall; therefore it follows, that, had Adam stood, he, and all his posterity, would have attained eternal life.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove, that God entered into covenant with Adam, inasmuch as he was given to expect, that, if he had yielded perfect obedience, he should have been possessed of the heavenly blessedness. But supposing this be not allowed of, and the arguments brought to prove it are reckoned inconclusive, it would be sufficient to our present purpose, and would argue the dispensation that Adam was under to be that of a covenant, if God had only promised him the grace of confirmation, and not to transplant him from the earthly to the heavenly paradise; for such a privilege as this, which would have rendered his fall impossible, would have contained so advantageous a circumstance attending the state in which he was, as would have plainly proved the dispensation he was under to be federal. Therefore, before we dismiss this head, we shall endeavour to make that appear, and consider,

1. That to be confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness, was necessary to render that state of blessedness, in which he was created compleat; for whatever advantages he was possessed of, it would have been a great allay to them to consider, that it was possible for him to lose them, or through any act of inadvertency, in complying with a temptation to fall, and ruin himself for ever. If the saints in heaven, who are ad-

vanced to a greater degree of blessedness, were not confirmed in it; if it was possible for them to lose, or fall from it, it would render their joy incomplete; much more would the happiness of Adam have been so, if he had been to have continued for ever, without this privilege.

2. If he had not had ground to expect the grace of confirmation in holiness and happiness, upon his yielding perfect obedience, then this perfect obedience, could not, in any respect, in propriety of speaking, be said to have been conditional, unless you suppose it a condition of the blessings which he was then possessed of; which seems not so agreeable to the idea contained in the word *condition*, which is considered as a motive to excite obedience, taken from some blessing, which would be consequent thereupon. But, if this be not allowed to have sufficient weight in it, let me add,

3. That it is agreeable to, and tends very much to advance the glory of the divine goodness, for God not to leave an innocent creature in a state of perpetual uncertainty, as to the continuance of his holiness and happiness; which he would have done, had he not promised him the grace of confirmation, whereby he would, by his immediate interposure, have prevented every thing that might have occasioned his fall.

4. This may be farther argued, from the method of God's dealing with other sinless creatures, whom he designed to make completely blessed, and so monuments of his abundant goodness. Thus he dealt with the holy angels, and thus he will deal with his saints, in another world; the former are, the other shall be, when arrived there, confirmed in holiness and happiness; and why should we suppose, that the goodness of God should be less glorified towards man at first, had he retained his integrity? Moreover, this will farther appear, if we consider,

5. That the dispensation of providence, which Adam was under, seems to carry in it the nature of a state of probation. If he was a probationer, it must either be for the heavenly glory, or, at least, for a farther degree of happiness, containing in it this grace of confirmation, which is the least that can be supposed, if there were any promise given him; and, if all other dispensations of providence, towards man, contain so many great and precious promises in them, as it is certain they do; can we suppose that man, in his state of innocency, had no promise given him? And, if he had, then I cannot but conclude, that God entered into covenant with him, which was the thing to be proved.

*Object.* 1. The apostle, in some of the scriptures but now referred to, calls the dispensation, that Adam was under, *a law*; therefore we have no ground to call it a covenant.



*Ans.* It is true, it is often called a *law*; but let it be considered, that it had two ideas included in it, which are not opposite to, or inconsistent with each other, namely, that of a law, and a covenant. As man was under a natural and indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and was liable to eternal death, in case of disobedience, it had in it the form and sanction of a law; and this is not inconsistent with any thing that has been before suggested, in which we have endeavoured to maintain, that, besides this, there was something added to it that contained the nature of a covenant, which is all that we pretend to prove; and therefore the dispensation may justly take its denomination from one or the other idea, provided, when one is mentioned, the other be not excluded. If we call it a law, it was such a law, as had a promise of super-added blessedness annexed to it; or if we, on the other hand, call it a covenant, it had, notwithstanding, the obligation of a law, since it was made with a subject, who was bound, without regard to his arbitrary choice in this matter, to fulfil the demands thereof.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, against what has been said concerning man's having a promise of the heavenly blessedness given him, upon condition of obedience, that this is a privilege peculiarly adapted to the gospel-dispensation; and that our Saviour was the first that made it known to the world, as the apostle says, that *life and immortality is brought to light through the gospel, and made manifest, by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. i. 10. and therefore it was not made known by the law, and consequently there was no promise thereof made to Adam in innocency; and the apostle says elsewhere, that *the way into the holiest of all, that is, into heaven, was not yet made manifest, while the first tabernacle was yet standing*, till Christ came, *who obtained eternal redemption for us*, Heb. ix. 8, 11, 12. From whence they argue, that we have no reason to conclude that Adam had any promise, or expectation, founded thereon, of the heavenly blessedness; and consequently the argument taken from thence to prove, that the dispensation he was under, was that of a covenant, is not conclusive.

*Ans.* It seems very strange, that any should infer, from the scriptures mentioned in the objection, that eternal life was altogether unknown in the world till Christ came into it, inasmuch as the meaning of those scriptures is plainly this: in the former of them, when the apostle speaks of *life and immortality as brought to light by the gospel*, nothing else can be intended, but that this is more fully revealed by the gospel, than it was before; or, that Christ revealed this as a purchased possession, in which respect it could not be revealed before. And, if this be opposed to the revelation given to Adam of life and

immortality, in the first covenant; it may be notwithstanding, distinguished from it: for though the heavenly blessedness was contained therein; yet it was not considered, as including in it the idea of salvation, as it does to us when revealed in the gospel.

As to the latter of those scriptures, concerning *the way into the holiest of all*, that is, into heaven, *not being made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing*, the meaning thereof is, that the way of our redemption, by Jesus Christ, was not so clearly revealed, or with those circumstances of glory under the ceremonial law, as it is by the gospel; or, at least, whatever discoveries were made thereof, yet the promises had not their full accomplishment, till Christ came and erected the gospel-dispensation; this, therefore, doth not, in the least, militate against the argument we are maintaining. Thus concerning the blessing promised in this covenant, namely, life, by which it farther appears to be a federal dispensation.

(3.) We are now to consider the condition of man's obtaining this blessing, which, as it is expressed in this answer, was personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience.

1. He was obliged to perform obedience, which was agreeable to his character, as a subject, and thereby to own the sovereignty of his Creator, and Lawgiver, and the equity of his law, and his right to govern him, according to it, which obligation was natural, necessary, and indispensable.

2. This obedience was to be personal, that is, not performed by any other in his behalf, and imputed to him, as his obedience was to be imputed to all his posterity; and therefore, in that respect, it would not have been personal, as applied to them; but as the obedience of Christ is imputed to us in the second covenant.

3. It was to be perfect, without the least defect, and that both in heart and life. He was obliged to do every thing that God required, as well as abstain from every thing that he forbade him; therefore we are not to suppose, that it was only his eating the forbidden fruit that would ruin him, though that was the particular sin by which he fell; since his doing any other thing, that was in itself sinful, or his neglecting any thing that was required, would equally have occasioned his fall.

But since we are considering man's obligation to yield obedience to the divine law, it follows from hence, that it was necessary that there should be an intimation given of the rule, or matter of his obedience, and consequently that the law of God should be made known to him; for it is absolutely necessary, not only that a law should be enacted, but promulgated, before the subject is bound to obey it. Now the law of God was made known to man two ways, agreeable to the twofold distinction thereof.

1st, The law of nature was written on his heart, in which the wisdom of God did as much discover itself, as in the subject matter of this law. In this respect, the whole law of nature might be said to be made known to him at once; the knowledge of which was communicated to him, with the powers and faculties of his soul, and was, as it were, instamped on his nature; so that he might as well plead, that he was not an intelligent creature, as that he was destitute of the knowledge of this law.

2dly, As there were, besides this, several other positive laws, that man was obliged to yield obedience to, though these could not, properly speaking, be said to be written on his heart; yet he had the knowledge hereof communicated to him. Whether this was done all at once, or at various times, it is not for us to determine; however, this we must conclude, that these positive laws could not be known in a way of reasoning, as the law of nature might. But, since we have sufficient ground to conclude, that God was pleased, in different ways and times, to communicate his mind and will to man, we are not to suppose that he was destitute of the knowledge of all those positive laws, that he was obliged to obey.

What the number of these laws was, we know not; but, as there have been, in all ages, various positive laws relating to instituted worship, doubtless, Adam had many such laws revealed to him though not mentioned in scripture. This I cannot but observe, because some persons use such modes of speaking about this matter, as though there were no other positive law, that man was obliged to obey but that of his not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, or, together with it, that which related to the observation of the sabbath. (a)

4. The obedience, which man was to perform, was to be perpetual; by which we are not to understand, that it was to be performed to eternity, under the notion of a condition of the covenant, though it certainly was, as this covenant contained in it the obligation of a law. The reason of this is very obvious; for, when any thing is performed, as a condition of obtaining a subsequent blessing it is supposed that this blessing is not to be conferred till the condition is performed. But that is inconsistent with the eternal duration of this obedience, on the performance whereof the heavenly blessedness was to be conferred; and therefore, though divines often use the word *perpetual*, when treating on this subject, it must be understood with this limitation, that man was to obey, without any interruption or defect, so long as he remained in a state of probation; and this obedience had a peculiar reference to the dispensation, as it was federal: but, when this state of trial was over,

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(a) Yet it is the better opinion, that he was vulnerable only on one point.



and the blessing, promised on this condition, conferred, then, though the same obedience was to be performed to eternity, it would not be considered as the condition of a covenant, but as the obligation of a law. And this leads us to enquire,

Whether we may not, with some degree of probability, without being guilty of a sinful curiosity, determine any thing relating to the time of man's continuance in a state of trial, before the blessing promised, at least, that part of it, which consisted in the grace of confirmation, would have been conferred upon him. Though I would not enter into any subject that is over-curious, or pretend to determine that which is altogether uncertain, yet, I think this is not to be reckoned so, especially if we be not too peremptory, or exceed the bounds of modesty, in what respects this matter. All that I shall say, concerning it, is, that it seems very probable that our first parents would have continued no longer in this state of probation, but would have attained the grace of confirmation, which is a considerable circumstance in the blessing promised in this covenant, as soon as they had children arrived to an age capable of obeying, or sinning, themselves, which, how long that would have been, it is a vain thing to pretend to determine.

The reason why divines suppose, that Adam's state of probation would have continued no longer, is, because these children must then either be supposed to have been confirmed in that state of holiness and happiness, in which they were or not. If they had been confirmed therein, then they would have attained the blessings of this covenant, before Adam had fulfilled the condition thereof. If they had not been confirmed, then it was possible for them to have fallen, and yet for him to have stood; and so his performing the condition of the covenant, would not have procured the blessing thereof for them, which is contrary to the tenor thereof. When our first parents would have been removed from paradise to heaven, and so have attained the perfection of the blessings contained in this covenant, it would be a vain, presumptuous, and unprofitable thing to enquire into.

(4.) The last thing observed, in this answer, is what some call the seals annexed to this covenant, as an ordinance designed to confirm their faith therein; and these were the two trees mentioned in Gen. ii. of which the tree of life was more properly called a seal, than the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

1. Concerning the tree of life, several things may be observed,

1st, It was a single tree, not a *species* of trees, bearing one sort of fruit, as some suppose: This is evident, because it is expressly said, that it was planted *in the midst of the garden*, Gen. ii. 9.

2dly, The fruit thereof is said, in the same scripture, to be

*pleasant to the sight, and good for food*, as well as that of other trees, which were ordained for the same purpose. It is a vain thing to enquire what sort of fruit it was ; and it is better to confess our ignorance hereof, than to pretend to be wise above what is written.

3dly, It is called the tree of life. Some suppose, that the principal, if not the only reason, of its being so called, was, because it was ordained to preserve man's natural life, or prevent any decay of nature ; or to restore it, if it were in the least impaired, to its former vigour. And accordingly they suppose, that, though man was made immortal, yet some things might have happened to him, which would have had a tendency to impair his health, in some degree, and weaken and destroy the temperament of his body, by which means death would gradually, according to the course of nature, be brought upon him : But, as a relief against this, he had a remedy always at hand ; for the fruit of this tree, by a medicinal virtue, would effectually restore him to his former state of health, as much as meat, drink, and rest, have a natural virtue to repair the fatigues, and supply the necessities of nature, in those who have the most healthful constitution, which would, notwithstanding, be destroyed, without the use thereof. But, though there be somewhat of spirit and ingenuity in this supposition ; yet why may we not suppose, that the use of any other food might have the same effect, which would be always ready at hand, whenever he had occasion for it, or wherever he resided ?

Therefore I cannot but conclude, that the principal, if not the only reason, of the tree of life's being so called, was because it was, by God's appointment, a sacramental sign and ordinance for the faith of our first parents, that, if they retained their integrity, they might be assured of the blessed event thereof, to wit, eternal life, of which this was, as it is called in this answer, a pledge ; and it contained in it the same idea, for substance, as other sacraments do, namely, as it was designed not to confer, but to signify the blessing promised, and as a farther means to encourage their expectation thereof : Thus our first parents were to eat of the fruit of this tree, agreeably to the nature of other sacramental signs, with this view, that hereby the thing signified might be brought to their remembrance, and they might take occasion, at the same time, to rely on God's promise, relating to the blessing which they expected ; and they might be as much assured, that they should attain eternal life, in case they persisted in their obedience, as they were, that God had given them this tree, and liberty to eat thereof, with the expectation of this blessing signified thereby.

Now, to make it appear, that it was designed as a sacramental sign of eternal life, which was promised in this covenant,

we may consider those allusions to it in the New Testament, whereby the heavenly glory is set forth : thus it is said, *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*, Rev. ii. 7. and elsewhere, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life*, chap. xxii. 14. It seems very plain, that this respects, in those scriptures, the heavenly glory, which is called the *New Jerusalem* ; or it has a particular application to that state of the church, *When God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying*, chap. xxi. 4. and it is mentioned immediately after, *Christ's coming quickly, and his rewards being with him*, chap. xxii. 12. and there are several other passages, which might be easily observed, which agree only with the heavenly state. Therefore, since this glory is thus described, why may we not suppose, that the heavenly state was signified by this tree to Adam, in paradise ?

And, that this may farther appear, let it be considered, that nothing is more common, in scripture, than for the 'Holy Ghost to represent the thing signified by the sign : Thus sanctification, which was one thing signified by circumcision, is called, *The circumcision made without hands*, Coloss. ii. 11. and regeneration, which is signified by baptism, is called, our *being born of water*, John iii. 5. and Christ, whose death was signified by the passover, is called, *Our Passover*, 1 Cor. v. 7. Many other instances, of the like nature, might be produced ; therefore, since the heavenly glory is represented by the tree of life, why may we not suppose, that the reason of its being so called, was, because it was ordained, at first, to be a sacramental sign or pledge of eternal life, which our first parents were given to expect, according to the tenor of that covenant, which they were under ?

*Object. 1.* It is objected, by some, that sacramental signs, ceremonies, or types, were only adapted to that dispensation, which the church of the Jews were under, and therefore were not agreeable to that state in which man was at first.

*Answ.* The ceremonial law, it is true, was not known, nor did it take place, while man was in a state of innocency ; nor was it God's ordinary way to instruct him then by signs ; yet it is not inconsistent with that state, for God to ordain one or two signs, as ordinances, for the faith of our first parents, the signification whereof was adapted to the state, in which they were, any more than our Saviour's instituting two significant ordinances under the gospel, *viz.* baptism, and the Lord's supper, as having relation to the blessings expected therein, is inconsistent with this present dispensation, in which we have nothing to do with the ceremonial law, any more than our first



parents had. And all this argues nothing more, than that God may, if he pleases, in any state of the church, instruct them in those things, which their faith should be conversant about, in what way he pleases.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, that the tree of life was not designed to be a sacramental sign of the covenant, which our first parents were under, but rather, as was before observed, an expedient, to render them immortal in a natural way, inasmuch as when man was fallen, yet the tree of life had still the same virtue: Accordingly it is said, *Lest he put forth his hand, and take of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth out of the garden of Eden; and he drove out the man: and placed cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life,* Gen. iii. 22, 23, 24. And some extend this objection so far, as that they suppose man did not eat of the tree of life before he fell, which, had he done, he would by virtue of his eating of it, have lived for ever, notwithstanding his sin: or if, as soon as he had fallen, he had had that happy thought, and so had eaten of it, he might, even then, have prevented death; and therefore God drove him out of paradise, that he might not eat of it, that so the curse, consequent upon his fall, might take effect.

*Ans.* The absurdity of this objection, and the method of reasoning made use of to support it, will appear, if we consider, that there was something more lost by man's fall, besides immortality, which no fruit, produced by any tree, could restore to him. And, besides, man was then liable to that curse, which was denounced, by which he was under an indispensable necessity of returning to the dust, from whence he was taken; and therefore the tree of life could not make this threatening of no effect, though man had eaten of it, after his fall: But, since the whole force of the objection depends on the sense they put on the text before-mentioned, agreeable thereunto, the only reply that we need give to it is, by considering what is the true and proper sense thereof.

When it is said, *God drove out the man, lest he should eat of the tree of life, and live for ever;* the meaning thereof is, as though he should say, Lest the poor deceived creature, who is now become blind, ignorant, and exposed to error, should eat of this tree, and think to live for ever, as he did before the fall, therefore he shall be driven out of paradise. This was, in some respect, an act of kindness to him, to prevent a mistake, which might have been of a pernicious tendency, in turning him aside from seeking salvation in the promised seed. Besides, when the thing signified, by this tree, was not to be obtained that way, in which it was before, it ceased to be a sacramental sign; and

therefore, as he had no right to it, so it would have been no less than a profanation to make a religious use of it, in his fallen state.

2. The other tree, which we read of, whereof our first parents were forbidden to eat, upon pain of death, is called, *The tree of knowledge, of good and evil*. Though the fruit of this tree was, in itself, proper for food, as well as that of any other; yet God forbade man to eat of it, out of his mere sovereignty, and that he might hereby let him know, that he enjoyed nothing but by his grant, and that he must abstain from things apparently good, if he require it. It is a vain thing to pretend to determine what sort of fruit this tree produced: it is indeed, a commonly received opinion, that it was an apple tree, or some species thereof; but, though I will not determine this to be a vulgar error, yet I cannot but think it a groundless conjecture\*; and therefore I would rather profess my ignorance as to this matter.

As to the reason of its being called the tree of knowledge, of good and evil; some have given great scope to their imaginations, in advancing groundless conjectures: thus the Jewish historian †, and, after him, several rabbinical writers, have supposed, that it was thus described, as there was an internal virtue in the fruit thereof, to brighten the minds of men, and, in a natural way, make them wise. And Socinus, and some of his brethren, have so far improved upon this absurd supposition, that they have supposed, that our first parents, before they ate of this tree, had not much more knowledge than infants have, which they found on the literal sense they give of that scripture, which represents them as not knowing that they were naked ‡. But enough of these absurdities, which carry in them their own confutation. I cannot but think, it is called the tree

\* *The principal argument brought to prove this, is the application of that scripture, to this purpose, in Cant. viii. 5. I raised thee up under the apple tree; there thy mother brought thee forth, as if he should say, the church, when fallen by our first parents eating the fruit of this tree, was raised up, when the Messiah was first promised. But, though this be a truth, yet whether it be the thing intended, by the Holy Ghost, in that scripture, is uncertain. As for the opinion of those who suppose it was a fig-tree, as Theodoret, [Vid. Quest. xxviii. in Gen.] and some other ancient writers; that has no other foundation, but what we read, concerning our first parents sewing fig leaves together, and making themselves aprons, which, they suppose, was done before they departed from the tree, their shame immediately suggesting the necessity thereof. But others think, that whatever tree it were, it certainly was not a fig-tree, because it can hardly be supposed but that our first parents, having a sense of guilt, as well as shame, would be afraid so much as to touch that tree, which had occasioned their ruin. Others conclude, that it was a vine, because our Saviour appointed that wine, which the vine produces, should be used, in commemorating his death, which removed the effects of that curse, which sin brought on the world: but this is a vain and trifling method of reasoning, and discovers what lengths some men run in their absurd glosses on scripture.*

† *Vid. Joseph. Antiquit. Lib. I. cap. 2.*

‡ *Vid. Socin. de Stat. Prim. Hom. & Smale. de ver. & Nat. Dei. Fil.*

of knowledge, of good and evil, to signify, that as man before knew, by experience, what it was to enjoy that good which God had conferred upon him, the consequence of his eating thereof would be his having an experimental knowledge of evil.

All that I shall add, concerning this prohibition, which God gave to our first parents, is, that, as to the matter of it, it was one of those laws, which are founded in God's arbitrary will, and therefore the thing was rendered sinful, only by its being forbidden; nevertheless, man's disobedience to it rendered him no less guilty, than if he had transgressed any of the laws of nature.

Moreover, it was a very small thing for him to have yielded obedience to this law, which was designed as a trial of his readiness, to perform universal obedience in all the instances thereof. It was not so difficult a duty, as that which God afterwards commanded Abraham to perform, when he bade him offer up his son; neither was he under a necessity of eating thereof, since he had such a liberal provision of all things for his sustenance and delight; and therefore his sin, in not complying herewith, was the more aggravated. Besides, he was expressly cautioned against it, and told, that *in the day that he eat of it, he should die*; whereby God, foreseeing that he would disobey this command, determined to leave him without excuse. This was that transgression by which he fell, and brought on the world all the miseries that have ensued thereon.

QUEST. XXI. *Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him?*

ANSW. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the forbidden fruit, and thereby fell from the state of innocency, wherein they were created.

**I**N this answer,

I. There is something supposed, namely, that our first parents were endued with a freedom of will. This is a property belonging to man, as a reasonable creature; so that we may as well separate understanding from the mind, as liberty from the will, especially when it is conversant about things within its own sphere, and, most of all, when we consider man in a state of perfection, as to all the powers and faculties of his soul, as he was before the fall. Now, that we may understand what this freedom of will was, let it be considered, that it consisted in a power, which man had, of choosing, or embracing, what



appeared, agreeably to the dictates of his understanding, to be good, or refusing and avoiding what was evil, and that without any constraint or force, laid upon him, to act contrary to the dictates thereof; and it also supposes a power to act pursuant to what the will chooses, otherwise it could not secure the happiness that it desires, or avoid the evil that it detests, and then its liberty would be little more than a name, without the thing contained in it.

Moreover, since the thing that the will chooses, is supposed to be agreeable to the dictates of the understanding, it follows, that if there be an error in judgment, or a destructive, or unlawful object presents itself, under the notion of good, though it be really evil, the will is, notwithstanding, said to act freely, in choosing or embracing it, in which respect it is free to evil, as well as to good.

To apply this to our present purpose, we must suppose man, in his state of innocency, to have been without any defect in his understanding, and therefore that he could not, when making a right use of the powers and faculties of his soul, call evil good, or good evil. Nevertheless, through inadvertency, the mind might be imposed on, and that which was evil might be represented under the appearance of good, and accordingly the will determine itself to choose or embrace it; for this is not inconsistent with liberty, since it might have been avoided by the right improvement of his natural powers, and therefore he was not constrained or forced to sin.

Now it appears, that our first parents had this freedom of will, or power to retain their integrity, from their being under an indispensable obligation to yield perfect obedience, and liable to punishment for the least defect thereof. This therefore, supposes the thing not to be in itself impossible, or the punishment ensuing unavoidable. Therefore it follows, that they had a power to stand; or, which is all one, a liberty of will, to choose that which was conducive to their happiness.

This might also be argued from the difference that there is between a man's innocent and fallen state. Nothing is more evident, than that man, as fallen, is, by a necessity of nature, inclined to sin; and accordingly he is styled, *a servant of sin*, John viii. 34. or a slave to it, entirely under its dominion: but it was otherwise with him before his fall, when, according to the constitution of his nature, he was equally inclined to what is good, and furnished with every thing that was necessary to his yielding that obedience, which was demanded of him.

II. It is farther observed, that our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will. This implies, that God did not design, especially, while they were in this state of probation, to afford them that immediate help, by the interposition of

his providence, which would have effectually prevented their compliance with any temptation to sin; for that would have rendered their fall impossible, and would have been a granting them the blessing of confirmation, before the condition thereof was fulfilled. God could easily have prevented Satan's entrance into paradise; as he does his coming again into heaven, to give disturbance to, or lay snares for any of the inhabitants thereof; or, though he suffered him to assault our first parents, he might, by the interposition of his grace, have prevented that inadvertency, by which they gave the first occasion to his victory over them. There was no need for God to implant a new principle of grace in their souls; for, by the right use of the liberty of their own wills, they might have defended themselves against the temptation; and had he given them a present intimation of their danger, or especially excited those habits of grace, which were implanted in their souls, at that time, when there was most need thereof, their sinful compliance with Satan's temptation would have been prevented: but this God was not obliged to do; and accordingly he is said to leave them to the freedom of their own wills. And this does not render him the author of their sin, or bring them under a natural necessity of falling, inasmuch as he had before furnished them with sufficiency of strength to stand. Man was not like an infant, or a person enfeebled, by some bodily distemper, who has no ability to support himself, and therefore, if not upheld by another, must necessarily fall: but he was like a strong man, who, by taking heed to his steps, may prevent his falling, without the assistance of others. He had no propensity in nature to sin, whereby he stood in need of preventing grace; and God, in thus leaving him to himself, dealt with him in a way agreeable to the condition in which he was. He did not force, or incline him to sin, but left him to the mutability of his own will, according to the tenor of the dispensation which he was under.

III. It is farther observed, that there was an assault made on our first parents by Satan, not by violence, but by temptation; the consequence whereof was, that, by sinful compliance therewith, they fell from their state of innocency. It appears very evident, from scripture, that they were deceived, or beguiled, as Eve says, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*, Gen. iii. 13. And the apostle Paul speaks concerning it to the same effect; *The woman being deceived, was in the transgression*, 1 Tim. ii. 14. in which scripture, though it be said, in the foregoing words, that *Adam was not deceived*, probably nothing more than this is intended, that the man was not first deceived, or not immediately deceived, by the serpent, but by his wife; though, indeed, some give another turn to that expression, and suppose that Adam sinned knowingly, being content to plunge

himself into the depths of misery, in complaisance to her, in her sorrows :\* But we rather think, that the apostle does not speak of Adam's not being deceived, but rather of his not being first deceived, or first in the transgression.

Now this deception or temptation, was from the devil, who, because of his subtilty, is called, *That old serpent*, Rev. xii. 9. chap. xx. 2. and he is said to make use of *wiles*, Eph. vi. 11. that is, various methods of deceit in suiting his temptations, so that men may be ensnared by them ; which leads us to consider,

IV. The methods he took to deceive our first parents, as we have a particular account thereof, and of their compliance therewith, in Gen. iii. 1—6. in which we shall take occasion to observe who the tempter was ; and the way and manner how he assaulted them.

There are two extremes of opinion, which some run into, which are equally to be avoided. On the one hand, some suppose that it was a beast, or natural serpent, that was the tempter, and that the devil had no hand in the temptation ; whereas others suppose that there was no serpent made use of, but that the devil did all without it, and that he is styled a serpent, in that scripture, from his subtilty. This we call another extreme of opinion, and, indeed, the truth lies in a medium between them both ; therefore we must suppose, that there was really a natural serpent, a beast so called, made use of, as an instrument, by the devil, by which he managed the temptation, and accordingly that he possessed and spake by it, which is the most common opinion, and agrees best with the account given of it in the above-mentioned scripture ; and it is also consistent with what our Saviour says of him, when describing him as *a murderer from the beginning*, John viii. 44.

That it was not only, or principally, the natural serpent that tempted our first parents, will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That, though the serpent, indeed, is said to be more subtle than all the beasts of the field, yet it never was endowed with speech,† and therefore could not, unless actuated by a spirit, hold a discourse with Eve, as he is said to have done.

(2.) Brute creatures cannot reason, or argue, as the serpent did ; for, whatever appearance of reason there may be in them,

\* This is beautifully described by Milton, (in his *paradise lost*, Book IX.) and many others have asserted the same thing for substance, as thinking it below the wisdom of the man to be imposed on ; thereby insinuating, though without sufficient ground, that he had a greater degree of wisdom allotted to him than his wife.

† Josephus indeed, (See *Antiq. Lib. I. cap. 2.*) intimates, that the serpent was, at first, endowed with speech, and that his loss of it was inflicted for his tempting man ; but it is a groundless conjecture arising from a supposition, that those things spoken of in Gen. iii. which are attributed to the devil, were done without him, which is not only his opinion, but of many other Jewish writers, and several modern ones.



it would be a very hard matter to prove that they are capable of digesting their ideas into a chain of reasoning, or inferring consequences from premises, as the serpent did; much less are they capable of reasoning about divine subjects, who know nothing of God, or the nature of moral good or evil, as the serpent that tempted Eve must be supposed to have done. But though the serpent was not the principal agent herein, yet it was made use of by the devil; and therefore the whole history, which we have thereof in the place before-mentioned, is not an allegorical account of what Satan did, as some suppose, without any regard to the part that the serpent bore therein.

This appears from the curse denounced against the serpent, *Because thou hast done this, saith God, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*, Gen. iii. 14. which is only applicable to the beast so called, and this we see evidently fulfilled at this day. Some, from hence, infer, not, I think, without reason, that the serpent, before this, went erect; whereas afterwards, as containing the visible mark of the curse, it is said to go on its belly. This part of the curse therefore respected the natural serpent only; whereas that contained in the following words, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*, ver. 15. respects the devil, that actuated, or spake by it; though I am not insensible that some Jewish writers, and others, who would exempt the devil from having any hand in the temptation, and throw all the blame on the brute creature, the natural serpent, give a very jejune and empty sense of this text, as though it were to be taken altogether, according to the letter thereof, as importing, that there should be a war between man and the serpent, that so he might be revenged on him, which should never cease till he had slain him, or had bruised his head. But it seems very plain, that as the former verse respects the instrument made use of, viz. the natural serpent, so this respects the devil, and contains a prediction, that his malice should be defeated, and his power destroyed, by our Saviour, who is here promised, and described as *the seed of the woman*. From all which we are bound to conclude, that the devil making use of the serpent, was the tempter, by whom our first parents were seduced, and led astray from God, to the ruin of themselves, and all their posterity.

There are several things that may be observed in the method Satan took in managing this temptation, by which he seduced and overcame our first parents, of which we have an account in the scripture before-mentioned.

1. He concealed his character as a fallen spirit, and pre-

tended himself to be in circumstances not unlike to those in which our first parents were, at least in this, that he seemed to pay a deference to the great God, so far as to allow that he had a right to give laws to his creatures; and it is more than probable that this was done immediately after his fall, and that our first parents knew nothing of this instance of rebellion in heaven, and did not, in the least, suppose that there were any creatures who were enemies to God, or were using endeavours to render them so. Had the devil given Eve an historical narration of his sin and fall, and begun his temptation with open blasphemy, or reproach cast on God, whom he had rebelled against, he could not but apprehend that our first parents would have treated him with the utmost abhorrence, and fled from him as an open enemy; but he conceals his enmity to God, while he pretends friendship to them, which was a great instance of subtilty; inasmuch as an enemy is never more formidable, that when he puts on a specious pretence of religion, or conceals his vile character as an enemy to God, and at the same time, pretends a great deal of friendship to those whom he designs to ruin.

2. As he tempted our first parents soon after his own fall, which shews his restless malice against God and goodness; so it was not long after their creation, in which he shewed his subtilty, not barely, as some suppose, because he was apprehensive, that the longer man stood, the more his habits of grace would be strengthened, and so it would be more difficult for the temptation to take effect. But that which seems to be the principal reason, was, either because he was apprehensive that man might soon have an intimation given him, that there were some fallen spirits, who were laying snares for his ruin, and therefore he would have been more guarded against him; or principally because he did not know but that man might soon be confirmed in this state of holiness and happiness; for how long God would continue him in a state of probation, was not revealed, and the devil knew very well that, upon his obtaining the grace of confirmation, after he had yielded obedience for a time, all his temptations would prove ineffectual; therefore he applied himself to his work with the greatest expedition.

3. He assaulted Eve when she was alone. This, indeed, is not expressly mentioned in scripture; but yet it seems very probable, inasmuch as he directed his discourse to, and held a conference with her, and not with Adam, which doubtless, he would have done, had he been present; and then it could hardly have been said, as the apostle does in the scripture before-mentioned, that the woman was *first in the transgression*, and that she was first deceived by the serpent; and, indeed, had he

been with her, though she might have been first in eating the forbidden fruit; yet he would have sinned, as being a partaker with her therein, by suffering her to comply with the temptation, and not warning her of her danger, or endeavouring to detect the devil's sophistry, and restrain her from compliance therewith. As the law deems every one to be principals in traiterous conspiracies against a prince, if they are only present, provided they do not use those proper means which they ought to prevent it; accordingly if Adam had been with Eve, he would have sinned with her, before he received the forbidden fruit from her hand; which we do not find him charged with; therefore she was alone, on which account the devil took her at the greatest disadvantage; for, as the wise man well observes, *Two are better than one; for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth*, Eccles. iv. 9, 10.

4. The instrument Satan made use of, was, as was before observed, the serpent: Probably he was not suffered to take a human shape; or, if he had, that would not so well have answered his end, since it would have tended to amuse and surprise our first parents, and have put them upon enquiries who he was, and whence he came, for they knew that there were no human creatures formed but themselves. If he had made use of an inanimate creature, it would have been more surprising to hear it speak and reason about the providence of God; and if he had not assumed any visible shape, he could not have managed the temptation with that success; for there was no corrupt nature in our first parents to work upon, as there is in us. Therefore some are ready to conclude, that no temptation can be offered to an innocent creature, in an internal way, by the devil; therefore it must be presented to the senses, and consequently it was necessary that he should assume some shape, and particularly that of some brute creature, that he might more effectually carry on his temptation. And it was expedient to answer his design, that he should not make use of any brute creature, that is naturally more stupid, and therefore less fit for his purpose; accordingly he made use of the serpent, concerning which it is observed, that it is *more subtil than any beast of the field*; and, as some suppose, it was, at first, a very beautiful creature, however odious it is to mankind at present, and that it had a bright shining skin curiously painted with variety of colours, which, when the sun shone upon it, cast a bright reflection of all the colours of the rainbow. But passing this by, as what is uncertain;

5. It is probable that the devil took that opportunity to discourse with Eve about the tree of knowledge, when she was standing by, or at least, not far from it, that so he might pre-



vail with her to comply with the temptation in haste ; whereas, if he had given her room for too much deliberation, it might have prevented his design from taking effect : If she had been at some distance from the tree, she would have had time to consider what she was going about ; she did not want understanding to detect the fallacy, had she duly weighed matters, and therefore would hardly have complied with the temptation. Again, that she was, at least, within sight of the tree appears from hence, that the serpent takes occasion, from the beholding of it, to discourse about it, and commend it ; and, while he was speaking about it to her, *she saw that it was pleasant to the eye, and good for food.*

6. As to what respects the matter of the temptation, we may observe, that the devil did not immediately tempt her to blaspheme God, to proclaim open war against him, or to break one of the commandments of the moral law ; but to violate a positive law, which, though heinous in its own nature, as it was a practical disowning or denying the sovereignty of God, and had many other aggravations attending it ; yet the breach of positive laws, founded on God's arbitrary will, are generally reckoned less aggravated, or we are inclined to entertain the temptation thereunto with less abhorrence than when we are tempted to break one of the moral laws, which are founded on the nature of God. Had he tempted her to deny that there was a God, or that there was any worship due to him ; or had it been to have murdered her husband, or to commit any other crime, which is in itself shocking to human nature, he would have had less ground to conclude that his temptation would have taken effect.

And here we may observe, that he proceeded, in a gradual way, from less to greater insinuations, brought against God.

(1.) He does not immediately and directly, in his first onset, bring a charge against God, or his providence, but pretends ignorance, and speaks as one that wanted information, when he says, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden, &c.* Here is a garden well stored with fruit, the trees whereof are designed for your food ; are there any of which you are prohibited to eat ? This question occasions her reply ; *The woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden ; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it ; neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Some think, that her sin began here, and that she misrepresents the divine prohibition, for she was not forbid to touch it ; it is only said, *In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17. But I cannot see that this was any other than a just inference from the prohibition itself, as every thing is to be avoided that may

prove an occasion of sin, as well as the sin itself. Others suppose, that there is a degree of unbelief contained in that expression, *Lest ye die* \*; which may be rendered, *Lest peradventure ye die*, as implying, that it was possible for God to dispense with his threatening, and so death would not certainly ensue; whereas God had expressly said, *In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*. But passing by this, as an uncertain conjecture, let us farther consider,

(2.) After this, Satan proceeds from questioning, as though he desired information, to a direct and explicit confronting the divine threatening, endeavouring to persuade her, that God would not be just to his word, when he says, *Ye shall not surely die*. He then proceeds yet farther, to cast an open reproach on the great God, when he says, *God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil*. Here we may observe,

1st, That he prefaces this reproach in a most vile and wicked manner, with an appeal to God for a confirmation of what he was about falsely to suggest, *God doth know*, &c.

2dly, He puts her in mind, that there were some creatures above her, with an intent to excite in her pride and envy: and it is as though he had said; notwithstanding your dominion over the creatures in this lower world, there are other creatures above you; for so our translation renders the words, *gods*, meaning the angels. And Satan farther suggests, that these excel man, as in many other things, so particularly in knowledge, thereby tempting her to be discontented with her present condition; and, since knowledge is the highest of all natural excellencies, he tempts her hereby to desire a greater degree thereof, than God had allotted her, especially in her present state, and so to desire to be equal to the angels in knowledge; which might seem to her a plausible suggestion, since knowledge is a desirable perfection. He does not commend the knowledge of fallen angels, or persuade her to desire to be like those who are the greatest favourites of God. From whence it may be observed, that it is a sin to desire many things that are in themselves excellent, provided it be the will of God that we should not enjoy them.

But it may be observed, that a different sense may be given of the Hebrew word, which we translate *gods*: for it may as well be rendered, *Ye shall be like God*, that is, *Ye shall have a greater degree of the image of God*; particularly that part of it that consists in knowledge. But however plausible this suggestion might seem to be, she ought not to have desired this privilege,

\* The words of the prohibition, in Gen. ii. 17. are, *Ye shall surely die: whereas in the account she gives thereof to the serpent, her words are, חַיָּה אֲנִי which Onkelos, in his Targum, renders, Ne forte moriamini*

if God did not design to give it, especially before the condition of the covenant she was under was performed ; much less ought she to have ventured to have sinned against God to obtain it.

3dly, Satan farther suggests, that her eating of the tree of knowledge would be a means to attain this greater degree of knowledge ; therefore he says, *In the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, &c.* We cannot suppose, that he thought her so stupid as to conclude that there was a natural virtue in the fruit of this tree, to produce this effect ; for none can reasonably suppose that there is a natural connexion between eating and increasing in knowledge. Therefore we may suppose, that he pretends that the eating thereof was God's ordinance for the attaining of knowledge ; so that, as the tree of life was a sacramental ordinance, to signify man's attaining eternal life, this tree was an ordinance for her attaining knowledge ; and therefore that God's design in prohibiting her from eating of it, was, that she should be kept in ignorance, in comparison with what she might attain to by eating of it : Vile and blasphemous insinuation ! to suggest, not only that God envied her a privilege, which would have been so highly advantageous, but that the sinful violation of his law was an ordinance to obtain it.

It is farther supposed, by some, though not mentioned in scripture, that Satan, to make his temptation more effectual, took and ate of the tree himself, and pretended, as an argument to persuade her to do likewise, that it was by this means, that he, being a serpent, and as such on a level with other animals of the same species, had arrived to the faculty of talking and reasoning, so that now he had attained a kind of equality with man ; therefore if she eat of the same fruit, she might easily suppose she should attain to be equal with angels. By these temptations, Eve was prevailed on, and so we read, that she *took of the fruit thereof, and did eat* ; it may be, the fruit was plucked off by the serpent, and held out to her, and she, with a trembling hand, received it from him, and thereby fell from her state of innocency.

Having considered the fall of Eve, who was the first in the transgression, we are now to speak of the fall of Adam : This is expressed more concisely in the fore-mentioned chapter, ver. 6. *She gave also unto her husband, and he did eat.* We are not to suppose that she gave him this fruit to eat, without his consent to take it ; or that she did not preface this action with something not recorded in scripture : but it is most probable that she reported to him what had passed between her and the serpent, and prevailed on him by the same arguments which she was overcome by ; so that Adam's fall was, in some respect, owing to the devil, though Eve was the more immediate instrument thereof. And to this we may add, that, besides her



alleging the arguments which the serpent had used to seduce her, it is more than probable she continued eating herself, and commending the pleasantness of the taste thereof, above all other fruits, as it might seem to her, when fallen, to be much more pleasant than really it was; for forbidden fruit is sweet to corrupt nature. And besides, we may suppose, that, through a bold presumption, and the blindness of her mind, and the hardness of her heart, which immediately ensued on her fall, she might insinuate to her husband, that what the serpent had suggested was really true; for as he had said, *Ye shall not surely die*, so now, though she had eaten thereof, she was yet alive; and therefore that he might eat thereof, without fearing any evil consequence that would attend it: by this means he was prevailed upon, and hereby the ruin of mankind was completed. Thus concerning their sin and fall.

V. We shall now consider what followed thereupon, as contained in that farther account we have of it, in Gen. iii. 7, &c. And here we may observe,

1. That they immediately betray and discover their fallen state, inasmuch as they, who before knew not what shame or fear meant, now experienced these consequences inseparable from sin: They knew that they were naked, and accordingly they were ashamed; (a) and had a sense of guilt in their consciences, and therefore were afraid. This appears, in that,

(a) The command had been given to Adam: he was the representative of Eve and his posterity; accordingly, upon her eating, no change was discovered: but as soon as he ate, "*the eyes of them both were opened*." They instantly felt a conscious loss of innocence, and they were ashamed of their condition.

This affection may have either good or evil as its exciting cause. The one species is praise-worthy, the other culpable. When there exists shame of evil, the honour of the party has been wounded.

Honour, the boast of the irreligious, is the vanguard of virtue, and is always set for her defence, while she is contented with her own station. But when honour assumes the authority, which belongs to conscience and reason, the man becomes an idolater. For conscience aims at God's glory, honour at man's; conscience leads to perfect integrity, whilst honour is contented with the reputation of it: the one makes us good, the other desires to become respectable. Conscience and religion will produce that, which honour aims at the name of. Honour without virtue, is mere hypocrisy.

But honour as ancillary to virtue, will detect and vanquish temptation, before virtue may apprehend danger: she is therefore to be regarded and fostered, but to be restrained within her own precincts.

Shame of good is rather an evidence of a want of honour, and springs from dastardly cowardice: it argues weak faith, superficial knowledge, and languid desires of good. Such knowledge and desires are barely enough to aggravate the guilt, and show it was deliberate.

The religious man must count upon opposition from a world hostile to holiness. His conduct and character will necessarily, by contrast, condemn those of the wicked. But he is neither to abandon his duty, but cause his light to shine; nor purposely afflict the sensibility of his enemies, but treat them with mildness and kindness. The demure and dejected countenance is to be avoided, not only because the christian has a right to be cheerful, but because when voluntary, it

2. God calls them to an account for what they had done, and they, through fear, hide themselves from his presence; which shews how soon ignorance followed after the fall. How unreasonable was it to think that they could hide themselves from God? since *there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves*, Job xxxiv. 22.

3. God expostulates with each of them, and they make excuses; the man lays the blame upon his wife, ver. 12. *The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*; which contains a charge against God himself, as throwing the blame on his providence, *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me*. And here was an instance of a breach of affection between him and his wife: as sin occasions breaches in families, and, an alienation of affection in the nearest relations, he complains of her, as the cause of his ruin, as though he had not been active in this matter himself.

The woman, on the other hand, lays the whole blame on the serpent, ver. 13. *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*. There was, indeed, a deception or beguiling; for, as has been already observed, an innocent creature can hardly sin, but through inadvertency, as not apprehending the subtilty of the temptation, though a fallen creature sins presumptuously, and with deliberation; however, she should not have laid the whole blame on the serpent, for she had wisdom enough to have detected the fallacy, and rectitude of nature sufficient to have preserved her from compliance with the temptation, if she had improved those endowments which God gave her at first.

We shall now consider the aggravations of the sin of our first parents. It contained in it many other sins. Some have taken pains to shew how they broke all the Ten Commandments, in particular instances: But, passing that by, it is certain, that

is hypocritical; and because also it injures the cause by exciting disgust and contempt, and provoking persecution, where a mild and evenly deportment would command the respect and admiration even of the evil themselves.

Contempt and ridicule will come. But the christian should know that this indicates defect in the authors of them. If religion were, as the infidel hopes it will prove, without foundation, to ridicule the conscientious man for his weakness, is rudeness, weakness, and want of generosity. If religion be doubtful, to ridicule it is to run the hazard of Divine resentment, and highly imprudent. If it be certain, it is to rush upon the bosses of God's buckler, and the most horrid insolence.

Ridicule is no test of truth, for the greatest and most important truths may be subjected to wit; it is no index of strength of understanding; and wit and great knowledge almost never are found together. It indicates nothing noble or generous, but a little piddling genius, and contemptible pride.

He who yields to the shame of that which is good, weakens his powers of resistance, provokes the Spirit of grace, hardens his conscience, strengthens the hands of the enemy, excites the contempt of the wicked themselves, grieves his fellow christians, affronts God to his face, and incurs the judgment of Christ: "Whosoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will I be ashamed."

they broke most of them, and those both of the first and second table; and it may truly be said, that, by losing their innocence, and corrupting, defiling, and depraving their nature, and rendering themselves weak, and unable to perform obedience to any command, as they ought, they were virtually guilty of the breach of them all, as the apostle says, *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. But, more particularly, there were several sins contained in this complicated crime; as,

(1.) A vain curiosity to know more than what was consistent with their present condition, or, at least, a desire of increasing in knowledge in an unlawful way.

(2.) Discontentment with their present condition; though without the least shadow of reason leading to it.

(3.) Pride and ambition, to be like the angels, or like God, in those things, in which it was unlawful to desire it: it may be, they might desire to be like him in independency, absolute sovereignty, &c. which carries in it downright Atheism, for a creature to desire thus to be like to him.

(4.) There was an instance of profaneness, in supposing that this tree was God's ordinance, for the attaining of knowledge, and accounting that, which was in itself sinful, a means to procure a greater degree of happiness.

(5.) It contained in it unbelief, and a disregard, either to the promise annexed to the covenant given to excite obedience, or the threatening denounced to deter from sin; and, on the other hand, they gave credit to the devil, rather than God.

(6.) There was in it an instance of bold and daring presumption, concluding that all would be well with them, or that they should, notwithstanding, remain happy, though in open rebellion against God, by the violation of his law; concluding, as the serpent suggested, that they should not surely die.

(7.) It was the highest instance of ingratitude, inasmuch as it was committed soon after they had received their being from God, and that honour of having all things in this world put under their feet, and the greatest plenty of provisions, both for their satisfaction and delight, and no tree of the garden prohibited, but only that which they ate of, Gen. ii. 16, 17.

(8.) It was committed against an express warning to the contrary; therefore whatever dispute might arise concerning other things being lawful, or unlawful, there was no question but that this was a sin, because expressly forbidden by God, and a caution given them to abstain from it.

(9.) If we consider them as endowed with a rectitude of nature, and in particular that great degree of knowledge which God gave them: This must be reckoned a sin against the greatest light; so that what inadvertency soever there might



have been, as to what respects that which first led the way to a sinful compliance: they had a sufficient degree of knowledge to have fenced against the snare, how much soever they pretended themselves to be beguiled and deceived, as an excuse for their sin; and, had they made a right use of their knowledge, they would certainly have avoided it.

(10.) Inasmuch as one of our first parents proved a tempter to the other, and the occasion of his ruin, this contained a notorious instance of that want of conjugal affection and concern for the welfare of each other, which the law of nature, and the relation they stood in to one another, required.

(11.) As our first parents were made after the image of God, this sin contained their casting contempt upon it; for they could not but know that it would despoil them of it. And as eternal blessedness was to be expected if they yielded obedience, this they also contemned, and, as every sinner does, they despised their own souls in so doing.

(12.) As Adam was a public person, the federal head of all his posterity, intrusted with the important affair of their happiness, though he knew that his fall would ruin them, together with himself, there was not only in it a breach of trust, but a rendering himself, by this means, the common destroyer of all mankind; which was a greater reproach to him, than his being their common father was an honour.

We shall conclude with a few inferences from what has been said, concerning the fall of our first parents.

1st, If barely the mutability of man's will, without any propensity or inclination to sin in his nature, may endanger, though not necessitate, his fall, especially when left to himself, as the result of God's sovereign will; then how deplorable is the state of fallen man, when left to himself by God in a judicial way, being, at the same time, indisposed for any thing that is good.

2dly, From the action of the devil, in attempting to ruin man, without the least provocation, merely out of malice against God, we may infer the vile and heinous nature of sin, its irreconcilable opposition to God; and also how much they resemble the devil, who endeavour to persuade others to join with them as confederates in iniquity, and thereby to bring them under the same condemnation with themselves: this is contrary to the dictates of human nature, unless considered as vile, degenerate, and depraved by sin.

3dly, How dangerous a thing is it to go in the way of temptation, or to parley with it, and not to resist the first motion that is made to turn us aside from our duty? And what need have we daily to pray, as instructed by our Saviour, that God

would not, by any occurrence of providence, lead us into temptation!

4thly, We learn, from hence, the progress and great increase of sin: it is like a spreading leprosy, and arises to a great height from small beginnings; so that persons proceed from one degree of wickedness to another, without considering what will be the sad effect and consequence thereof.

QUEST. XXII. *Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?*

ANSW. The covenant being made with Adam, as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

HAVING shewn, in the foregoing answer how our first parents sinned and fell, we are now led to consider, how their fall affected all their posterity, whom they represented; and accordingly it is said, that the covenant was made with Adam, as a federal head, not for himself only, but all his posterity; so that they sinned in, and fell with him. But, before we enter more particularly on this subject, it may not be improper to enquire, whether this character, of being the head of the covenant, respects only Adam, or both our first parents? I am sensible there are many who think this covenant was made with Adam, as the head of his posterity, exclusive of Eve; so that, as he did not represent her therein, but his seed, she was not, together with him, the representative of mankind; therefore, though the covenant was made with her, and she was equally obliged to perform the conditions thereof, yet she was only to stand or fall for herself, her concern herein being only personal; and therefore it follows, from hence, that when she fell, being *first in the transgression*, all mankind could not be said to sin and fall in her, as they did in Adam; therefore, if she alone had sinned, she would have perished alone.

And if it be objected hereunto, that she could not then be the mother of innocent children, for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* The reply, which is usually given to this, which is only matter of conjecture, is, that God would have created some other woman, who should have been the mother of a sinless posterity. (a)

The reason why these conclude that the covenant was made only with Adam, is because we never read expressly, in scripture, of its being made with Eve in behalf of her posterity; and particularly it is said, in Gen. ii. 16, 17. that *the Lord God*

(a) If Adam represented Eve (his rib) in the covenant, she did not fall till he fell

commanded the man, saying, *Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* And it is observed, that this law was given to him before the woman was created; for it said, in the following words, *It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.* And, in other scriptures, which treat of this matter, we read of the man's being the head of the covenant, but not his wife: thus the apostle, in 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. compares him, whom he styles, *the first man, Adam*, as the head of this covenant, with Christ, whom he calls, *The second man*, as the head of the covenant of grace; and elsewhere he says, *As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, ver. 22. and again *By one man sin entered into the world*, &c. Rom. v. 12. and *By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners*, ver. 19. It is not said by the disobedience of our first parents, but of one of them, to wit, Adam; therefore, from hence, they conclude, that he only was the head of this covenant, and herein the representative of mankind.

But, though I would not be too peremptory in determining this matter, yet, I think, it may be replied to what has been said in defence thereof; that though it is true, it is said, in the scripture, but now mentioned, that God forbade the man to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, before the woman was created, yet she expressly says, that the prohibition respected them both\*, when he tells the serpent, *We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat thereof, lest ye die*, Gen. iii. 2, 3. Besides, we read, that Eve had dominion over the creatures, as well as Adam, Gen. i. 26—28. it is true, it is said, that *God created man*, &c. but by the word *man*, both our first parents are intended; for it immediately follows, *and he blessed them*, therefore the woman was not excluded; so that we may apply the apostle's words, (though used with another view) *The man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xi. 11. to this particular dispensation of providence. And there seems to be the same reason for one's being constituted the federal head of their posterity, as the other, since they were both designed to be the common parents thereof; the tenor of the covenant seems to be the same with respect to them both, and the tree of life was a seal and pledge of blessings, to be conveyed by both.

But to proceed to consider the subject-matter of this answer,

\* *The compilers of the LXX. seem to have understood the words in this sense, when they render the text in Gen. ii. 17. ἡ δὲ ἐν ἡμῶν φέρητε ἀπ' αὐτῆς θάνατον ἀποθανισθε*



I. We shall prove, that Adam was a public person, the head of the covenant with whom it was made for himself, and all his posterity. When we speak of him as the head of our posterity, we do not only mean their common parent, for, had there been no other idea contained therein, I cannot see how they could be said to fall in him; for it doth not seem agreeable to the justice of God to punish children for their parents' sins, unless they make them their own, at least, not with such a punishment that carries in it a separation from his presence, and a liableness to the condemning sentence of the law.

Therefore Adam must be considered as constituted their head, in a federal way, by an act of God's sovereign will, and so must be regarded as their representative, as well as their common parent; which, if it can be proved, then they may be said to fall with him. For the understanding hereof, we must conclude him to have been the head of the world, even as Christ is the Head of his elect; so that, in the same sense as Christ's righteousness becomes their's to wit, by imputation, Adam's obedience, had he stood, would have been imputed to all his posterity, as his sin is, now he is fallen. This is a doctrine founded on pure revelation: and therefore we must have recourse to scripture, to evince the truth thereof. Accordingly,

1. There are several scriptures in which this doctrine is contained; as that in Rom. v. 14. where the apostle speaks concerning our fall in Adam, whom he calls, the *figure* \* of him that was to come. Now, in what was Adam a type of Christ? Not as he was a man, consisting of soul and body; for, in that respect, all that lived before Christ, might as justly be called types of him. Whenever we read of any person, or things, being a type in scripture, there are some peculiar circumstances by which they may be distinguished from all other persons, or things that are not types. Now Adam was distinguished from all other persons, more especially as he was the federal head of all his posterity; and that he was so, appears from what the apostle not only occasionally mentions, but largely insists on, and shews in what respect this was true; and he particularly observes, that as one conveyed death the other was the head, or Prince of Life. These respective things indeed, were directly opposite, therefore the analogy, or resemblance, consisted only in the manner of conveying them; so that as death did not become due to us, in the first instance of our liableness to it, for our own actual sin, but the sin of Adam; that right we have to eternal life, by justification, is not the result of our own obedience, but Christ's: This is plainly the apostle's method of reasoning. Now, if Christ was, in this re-

\* *Τύπος*, the Type.

spect a federal Head and Representative of his people, then Adam, who is in this, or in nothing, his type, or figure, must be the Head of a covenant, in which his posterity were included.

There is another scripture, by which this may be proved in 1 Cor. xv. 45——59. where the apostle speaks of the *first and second Adam*; by the latter he means Christ. Now, why should he be called the second man, who lived so many ages after Adam, if he did not design to speak of him, as typified by him, or bearing some resemblance of him? And, in other expressions, he seems to imply as much, and shews how we derive death from Adam, of whom he had been speaking, in the foregoing verses. Accordingly, he says, *The first man was of the earth, earthy: and, as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy, and we have borne the image of the earthy*; so that if Adam was the root and occasion of all the miseries we endure in this world, arising from his violation of the covenant he was under, it plainly proves, that he was therein the head and representative of all his posterity.

For the farther proof of this, we may take occasion to consider the apostle's method of reasoning, in the scripture but now referred to, *By one man sin entered into the world*, that is, by the first man, *in whom all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. so I would choose to render it rather than as it is in our translation, since this seems to be the most natural sense of the word\*; and it proves Adam, in whom all sinned, to be their head and representative, and also agrees best with the apostle's general design, or argument, insisted on, and farther illustrated in the following verses.

Again, the apostle speaks of those penal evils consequent on Adam's sins, which could not have befallen us, had he not been our federal head and representative; Thus, in ver. 18. *By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation* †. It may be observed, that the apostle, in this text, uses a word, which we translate *condemnation* ‡; which cannot, with

\* 'Εφ' ω. † The words are, *ὡς δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, εἰς πάντας ἀνθρώπους εἰς κατακρίματα*. The word Judgment, though not in the original, is very justly supplied in our translation, from verse 16. or else, as the learned Grotius observes, the word *εἰς κρίματα* might have been supplied; and so the meaning is, *Res processit in condemnationem*. And J. Capellus gives a very good sense of the text, when he compares Adam as the head, who brought death into the world, with Christ by whom life is obtained. His words are these: *Quemadmodum omnes homines, qui condemnantur, reatum suum contraxerunt, ab una unius hominis offensa; sic & quotquot vivificantur, absolutio-nem suam obtinuerunt ab una unius hominis obedientia*.

† The word *κατάκριμα* is used in scripture, in a forensic sense, in those places of the New Testament, where it is found: Thus ver. 16. of this chapter, and chap. viii. 1. And accordingly it signifies a judgment unto condemnation; as also do those words, the sense whereof has an affinity to it, in Rom. viii. 34. *τὸ κατάκριτον*; and also *κατάκριτος*, as in Acts xvi. 37. and chap. xxii. 25. So that, according to the

any manner of consistency, be taken in any other than a forensick sense; and therefore he argues, from thence, that we are liable to condemnation, by the offence of Adam; which certainly proves the imputation of his offence to us, and consequently he is considered therein as our federal head.

2. This farther appears, in that all mankind are exposed to many miseries, and to death, which are of a penal nature; therefore they must be considered, as the consequence of sin. Now they cannot be the consequence of actual sin, in those, who are miserable and die, as soon as they are born, who have *not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression*; therefore this must be the result of his sin, which it could not be, had he not been the federal head of all his posterity. (a)

*Object.* It is objected to this, that God might, out of his mere sovereignty, ordain that his creatures should be exposed to some degree of misery; and, if this misery be not considered, as the punishment of sin, in infants, then it does not prove the imputation of Adam's sin to them; and even their death, considered only as a separation of soul and body, may not contain in it a proper idea of punishment, (which consists in the stroke of justice, demanding satisfaction for sin) if it be only reckoned an expedient, or a necessary means for their attaining eternal life. Therefore it doth not follow, that, because we are liable to death, before we have done good or evil, it must necessarily be a punishment due to that sin, which was committed by Adam.

*Answ.* 1. I will not deny but that God might dispense some lesser degrees of natural evil, to a sinless creature, out of his mere sovereignty; neither will I contend with any, who shall say, that he might, without any dishonour to his perfections, send on him an evil, sensibly great, provided it were not only consistent with his love, but attended with those manifestations and displays thereof, which would more than compensate for it, and, at the same time, not have any tendency to prevent the

*construction of the word, though κριμα signifies judicium in general, κακικριμα signifies judicium adversus aliquem, or condemnatio.*

(a) That mankind are born and live in sin, may be collected from various sources of argument; by matter of fact, none are found free from, who are capable of actual guilt, by the evils and death which a just God would not otherwise inflict; by the ideas of the ancients who speak of a degeneration from a golden, to an iron age, by the general practice of offering sacrifice, which is an acknowledgment of guilt, by the testimony of the heathens, that evil example has a preponderating influence over good, by the historical account of the fall of man in the scriptures, by their numerous testimonies that none are righteous before God or can be justified by their obedience to his laws, by the confessions of the saints, by the necessity of repentance in all, by the propriety of prayer for the pardon of sin, by Christ's example of daily prayer which contains such a petition, by the necessity of faith that we may please God, by man's unwillingness to be reconciled to God, and rejection of all the spiritual good things offered, and contempt of divine threatenings; and above all other proofs, by the coming and suffering of Christ.



answering the end of his being ; yet I may be bold to say, that, from the nature of the thing, God cannot inflict the least degree of punishment on a creature, who is, in all respects guiltless. If therefore these lesser evils are penal, they are the consequence of Adam's sin.

2. As for death, that must be considered as a penal evil ; for, as such, it was first denounced, as a part of the curse, consequent on Adam's sin ; and the apostle says, *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. vi. 23. and elsewhere he speaks of all men, as *dying in Adam*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. and therefore his sin is imputed to all mankind ; and consequently he was their federal head and representative in the covenant that he was under.

II. They, whose federal head and representative Adam was, are such as descended from him by ordinary generation. The design of this limitation is to signify, that our Saviour is excepted, and consequently that he did not sin or fall in him, inasmuch as he was born of a virgin ; therefore, though he had the same human nature with all Adam's posterity, yet he did not derive it from him, in the same way as they do ; and a similitude of nature, or his being a true and proper Man, does not render him a descendant from Adam, in the same way as we are. The formation of his human nature was the effect of miraculous, supernatural, creating power ; therefore he was no more liable to Adam's sin, as being a Man, than a world of men would be, should God create them out of nothing, or out of the dust of the ground, by a mediate creation, which would be no more miraculous, or supernatural, than it was to form the human nature of Christ in the womb of a virgin. Now, as persons, so formed, would not be concerned in Adam's sin, or fall, whatever similitude there might be of nature ; even so our Saviour was not concerned therein. (a)

Moreover, that we might understand that he was not included in this federal transaction with Adam, the apostle opposes him, as the *second Man*, the federal Head of his elect, or spiritual seed, to Adam, the *first man*, and head of his natural seed, in that scripture before referred to, ver. 45. And, as an argument, that his extraordinary and miraculous conception exempted him from any concern in Adam's sin and fall ; the angel, that gave the first intimation hereof, when he tells the blessed virgin, his mother, that *the Holy Ghost should come upon her, that the power of the highest should over-shadow her*, he says, *Therefore that Holy Thing, that shall be born of thee, shall be called, the Son of God* ; thereby implies, that, in his first formation, he was holy, and consequently had no concern in the guilt of Adam's sin, because of the manner of his formation, or conception ; and this is certainly a better way to account for his be-

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(a) The covenant of grace was from eternity, and implied his innocence.

ing sinless, than to pretend, as the Papists do, that his mother was sinless ; which will do no service to their cause, unless they could ascend in a line to our first parents, and so prove, that all our Saviour's progenitors were immaculate, as well as the virgin ; which is more than they pretend to do.

III. It is farther observed, in this answer, that mankind sinned in and fell with Adam in his *first transgression*, and therefore they had no concern in those sins, which he committed afterwards. This appears from hence, that Adam, as soon as he sinned, lost the honour and prerogative, that was conferred upon him, of being the federal head of his posterity, though he was their natural head, or common father ; for the covenant being broken, all the evils, that we were liable to, arising from thence, were devolved upon us, and none of the blessings, contained therein, could be conveyed to us that way, since it was impossible for him, after his fall, to perform sinless obedience, which was the condition of the life promised therein. This doth not arise so much from the nature of the covenant, as from the change that there was in man, with whom it was made. The law, or covenant, would have given life, if man could have yielded perfect obedience ; but since his fall rendered that impossible, though the obligation thereof, as a law, distinct from a covenant, and the curse, arising from the sanction thereof, remains still in force against fallen man ; yet, as a covenant, in which life was promised, it was, from that time, abrogated ; and therefore the apostle speaks of it, as being *weak through the flesh*, Rom. viii. 3. that is, by reason of Adam's transgression, and consequently he ceased, from that time, to be the federal head, or means of conveying life to his posterity ; therefore those sins that he committed afterwards, were no more imputed to them, to inhanche their condemnation, than his repentance, or good works, were imputed for their justification.

IV. Having considered the first transgression of Adam, as imputed to all those who descended from him by ordinary generation, we shall proceed to consider, how this doctrine is opposed, by those who are in the contrary way of thinking.

*Object. 1.* It is objected, that what is done by one man cannot be imputed to another ; for this is contrary to the divine perfections, to the law of nature, and the express words of scripture. It is true, that which is done by us, in our own persons, may be imputed to us, whether it be good or evil. Thus it is said, that Phinehas's *zeal in executing judgment, by which means the plague was stayed, was counted to him for righteousness*, Psal. cvi. 30, 31. so was Abraham's *faith*, Rom. iv. 9, 23. Accordingly God approved of these their respective good actions, as what denominated them righteous persons, and pla-

ced them to their account, as bestowing on them some rewards accordingly ; so, on the other hand, a man's own sin may be imputed to him, and he may be dealt with as an offender : But to impute the sin committed by one person to another, is to suppose that he has committed that sin which was really committed by another ; in which case, the Judge of all the earth would not do right.

*Ans.* When we speak of persons being punished for a crime committed by another, as being imputed to them, we understand the word *imputation* in a forensick sense, and therefore we do not suppose that here is a wrong judgment passed on persons or things, as though the crime were reckoned to have been committed by them ; accordingly we do not say, that we committed that sin, which was more immediately committed by Adam. In him it was an actual sin ; it is ours, as imputed to us, or as we are punished for it, according to the demerit of the offence, and the tenor of the covenant, in which we were included.

Moreover, it is not contrary to the law of nature, or nations, for the iniquity of some public persons to be punished in many others, so that whole cities and nations have suffered on their account ; and as for scripture-instances hereof, we often read of whole families and nations, suffering for the crimes of those, who had been public persons, and exemplary in sinning. Thus Achan coveted the wedge of gold, and, for this, he suffered not alone ; but his *sons and daughters were stoned, and burned with fire*, together with himself, Joshua vii. 24, 25. though we do not expressly read, that they were confederates with him in the crime. And as for the Amalekites, who, without provocation, came out against Israel in the wilderness, God threatens them, that he would have *war with them for this, from generation to generation*, Exod. xvii. 16. and in pursuance of this threatening, God, imputing the crime of their forefathers to their posterity, some hundreds of years after, ordered *Saul to go and utterly destroy them, by slaying both man and woman, infant and suckling*, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3. And the sin of Jeroboam was punished in his posterity, according to the threatening denounced, 1 Kings xiv. 10, 11. as was also the sin of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 21, 22. And the church acknowledges, that it was a righteous dispensation of providence for God to bring upon Judah those miseries, which immediately preceded, and followed their being carried captive, when they say, *Our fathers have sinned, and are not ; and we have borne their iniquity*, Lam. v. 7. and our Saviour speaks to the same purpose, when he tells the Jews, *That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar*, Matth. xxiii. 35. These instances, and others of



the like nature, prove that it is no unheard of thing, for one man to suffer for a crime committed by another\*.

But I am sensible the principal thing intended in the objection, when this is supposed to be contrary to scripture, is, that it contradicts the sense of what the prophet says, when he tells the people, that *they should not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge; for the soul that sinneth shall die*, Ezek. xviii. 2—4. the meaning of which scripture is, that if they were humble and penitent, and did not commit those crimes that their fathers had done, they should not be punished for them, which was a special act of favour, that God would grant them on this supposition; and it is as much as to say, that he would not impute their father's sins to them, or suffer them to be carried captive, merely because their fathers had deserved this desolating judgment. But this does not, in all respects, agree with the instance before us; for we are considering Adam as the federal head of his posterity, and so their fathers were not to be considered in this, and such like scriptures. Moreover, the objectors will hardly deny, that natural death, and the many evils of this life, are a punishment, in some respects, for the sin of our first parents. Therefore the question is not, whether some degree of punishment may ensue hereupon? but, whether the greatest degree of the punishment of sin in hell, can be said to be the consequence hereof? But this we shall be led more particularly to consider, under a following answer †.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, that it is not agreeable to the divine perfections, for God to appoint Adam to be the head and representative of all his posterity; so that they must stand, or fall, with respect to their spiritual and eternal concerns in him, inasmuch as this was not done by their own choice and consent, which they were not capable of giving, since they were not existent. The case say they, is the same, as though a king should appoint a representative body of men, and give them a power to enact laws, whereby his subjects should be dispossessed of their estates and properties, which no one can suppose to

\* This is not only agreeable to many instances contained in scripture, but it has been acknowledged to be just by the very heathen, as agreeable to the law of nature and nations. Thus one says: Sometimes a whole city is punished for the wickedness of one man: Thus Hesiod, πολλὰκι καὶ ξυμπᾶσα πόλις κακῶν ἀνδρῶν πταυρεῖ; and Horace says, Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi: And one observes, that it was the custom of several cities of Greece, to inflict the same punishment on the children of tyrants, as their fathers had done on others: In Græcis civitatibus liberi tyrannorum suppressis illis, eodem supplicio afficiuntur. Vid. Cicer. Epist. ad Brut. XI. & Q. Curt. Lib. VI. speaks of a law observed among the Macedonians; in which, traitorous conspiracies against the life of the prince were punished, not only in the traitors themselves, but in their near relations, Qui regi insidiati essent, illi cum cognatis & propinquis suis morte afficerentur.

† See Quest. XXV.

be just ; whereas if they had chosen them themselves, they would have no reason to complain of any injustice that was done them, inasmuch as the laws, made by their representatives, are, in effect, their own laws. Therefore, to apply this to the case before us, had all mankind chose Adam to be their representative, or consented to stand or fall in him, there would have been no reason to complain of the dispensation of God's providence, relating hereunto : but, inasmuch as it was otherwise, it does not seem agreeable to the justice of God, to constitute him the head and representative of all his posterity : so that, by his fall, they should be involved in ruin, and eternal perdition.

*Answ.* There are various methods taken to answer this objection.

1. Some say little more to it than this : That if Adam had retained his integrity, we should have accepted of, and rejoiced in that life, which he would have procured by his standing ; there would then have been no complaint, or finding fault, with the divine dispensation, as though it had been unjust ; therefore, since he fell, and brought death into the world, it is reasonable that we should submit, and acknowledge, that all the ways of God are equal. But, though we must all allow that submission to the will of God, in whatever he does, is the creatures duty, yet I cannot think this a sufficient answer to the objection, and therefore would not lay much stress upon it, but proceed to consider what may be farther said in answer to it.

2. Others say, that, since Adam was the common father, and consequently the most honourable of mankind, (our Saviour only excepted, whom he did not represent) therefore it was fit that he should have this honour conferred upon him ; so that, had all his posterity been existent, and the choice of a representative been wholly referred to them, the law of nature would have directed to, and pointed out the man, who ought, in this respect, to have the preference to all others. This answer bids fairer, I confess to remove the difficulty than the other, especially if it be added, that God might have given Adam some advantages of nature, above the rest of mankind, besides that relative one, arising from his being their common father ; and therefore, that it would have been their interest, as well as their duty, to have chosen him, as being best qualified to perform the work that was devolved upon him.

3. But, since this will not wholly remove the difficulty, it is farther alleged, that God chose him, and therefore we ought to acquiesce in his choice ; and, indeed, had all mankind been then existent, supposing them to be in a state of perfect holiness (and we must not suppose the contrary) then they would have acknowledged the equity of this divine dispensation, otherwise they would have actually sinned, and fallen, in rejecting

and complaining of the will of God. But this will not satisfy those who advance the contrary scheme of doctrine, and deny the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, who still complain of it, as a very severe dispensation, and conclude, that the sovereignty of God is pleaded for against his other perfections; therefore something farther must be added, in answer to the objection.

We freely allow, that it is not equitable (to use the similitude taken from human forms of government) for a king to appoint a representative, who shall have a power committed to him, to take away the properties, or estates of his subjects: but this does not, in many respects, agree with the matter under our present consideration: nevertheless, if we were to suppose, that these subjects had nothing which they could call their own, separate from the will of the prince, and their properties and estates were not only defended, but given by him, and that upon this tenure, that he reserved to himself a right to dispossess them of them at his pleasure; in this case, he might, without any injustice done them, appoint a representative, by whose conduct they might be forfeited, or retained; and this agrees with our present argument. Accordingly let it be considered, that there were some things which Adam was possessed of in his state of innocency, and others which he was given to expect, had he stood, which he had no natural right to, separate from the divine will; therefore it follows, from hence, that God might, without doing his posterity any injustice, repose this in the hands of a mutable creature, so that it should be retained or lost for them, according as he stood or fell. And this will appear less exceptionable, when we consider the nature of that guilt, which all mankind were brought under, by Adam's sin, and the loss of original righteousness, as the consequence of his fall; which they, who maintain the other side of the question, generally represent, in such a way, as though we supposed that there were no difference between it, and the guilt contracted, together with the punishment ensuing on actual sins, how great soever they are. But this will be more particularly considered under a following answer,\* in which we shall endeavour to take a just estimate of the difference between the guilt of Adam's sin, imputed to us, and that of actual sins committed by us.

QUEST. XXIII. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSW. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

\* See Quest. XXVII



QUEST. XXIV. *What is sin?*

ANSW. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

QUEST. XXV. *Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSW. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created; and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually, which is commonly called, Original sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

QUEST. XXVI. *How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?*

ANSW. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them, in that way, are conceived and born in sin.

**H**AVING considered the fall of our first parents, and all mankind being so far concerned therein, as that their sin is imputed to them; we are now led to speak concerning that sin and misery which ensues hereupon. And,

I. This is not barely called a single act of sin, or one particular instance of misery, but a state of sin and misery. Man's being brought into a state of sin, is sometimes called sin's reigning, or having dominion over him; and his being brought into a state of misery, is called the reign, or dominion of death; so that as, by various steps, we proceed from one degree of sin unto another, our condemnation is gradually enhanced thereby. This is the subject matter of the first of these answers.

II. We have a brief definition of sin, in which there is something supposed, namely, that there was a law given, and promulgated, as a rule of obedience, to the reasonable creature, without which there could be no sin committed, or guilt contracted; as the apostle saith, *Where no law is, there is no transgression*, Rom. iv. 15. or, *Sin is not imputed, where there is no law*, chap. v. 13.

And inasmuch as it is observed, that the subjects, bound by this law, are reasonable creatures; this gives us to understand, that though other creatures be the effect of God's power, and the objects of his providence, yet they are not the subjects of moral government. They cannot therefore be under a law, inasmuch as they are not capable of understanding their relation to God, as Sovereign, or their obligation to obey him, or the

meaning of a law, which is the rule thereof. Moreover, we have in this answer, an account of the formal nature of sin.

1. It is considered, either in its negative, or rather privative idea, as containing in it a defect, or want of conformity to the law, a privation of that rectitude of nature, or righteousness that man had at first, or our not performing that which we are bound, by the law of God, to do; and those particular instances of sin, included herein, are called sins of omission.

2. It is described by its positive idea, and so it is called, a transgression of the law, or doing that which is forbidden by it. Thus it is called, by the apostle, *The transgression of the law*, 1 John iii. 4. This we shall not insist on at present, inasmuch as we shall have occasion to enlarge on this head, when we consider the sins forbidden, under each of the ten commandments, and the various aggravations thereof.\*

III. We are, in the next answer, led to consider the sinfulness of all mankind, as fallen in Adam, or original sin, as derived to, and discovered in us; and this consists more especially in our being guilty of Adam's first sin, our wanting that righteousness which he was possessed of; and also in the corruption of nature, from whence all actual transgressions proceed.

1. We shall enquire what we are to understand by the guilt of Adam's first sin. Having before shewn that his disobedience is imputed to his posterity, that which is the result thereof, is, that all the world becomes guilty before God: guilt is an obligation, or liableness to suffer punishment for an offence committed, in proportion to the aggravations thereof. Now, since this guilt was not contracted by us, but imputed to us, we must consider it as the same, in all; or not admitting of any degrees; nevertheless, there is a very great difference between that guilt which is the result of sin imputed to, and that which arises from sin's being committed by us. They, who do not put a just difference between these two, give occasion to many prejudices against this doctrine, and do not sufficiently vindicate the perfections of God, in his judiciary proceedings in punishing one or the other of them. That we may avoid this inconvenience, let it be considered, that original and actual sins differ more especially in two respects.

(1.) The sin of our first parents, how heinous soever it was in them, as being an actual transgression, attended with the highest aggravations, yet it cannot be said to be our actual sin, or committed by an act of our will; therefore, though the imputation thereof to us, as has been before proved, is righteous, yet it has not those circumstances attending it, as though it had been committed by us. Therefore,

\* See *Quest. cv. — cñ.*

(2.) The guilt thereof, or the punishment due to it, cannot be so great as the guilt we contract, or the punishment we are liable to, for actual sins, which are committed with the approbation and consent of the will, and as they are against some degree of light and convictions of conscience, and manifold engagements to the contrary: but this does not properly belong to Adam's sin, as imputed to us; nor is the punishment due to it the same, as though it had been committed by us in our own persons.

But, that we may not be misunderstood, let it be considered, that we are not speaking of the corruption of nature inherent in us. We do not deny, but that the fountain that sends forth all actual sins, or that sin reigning in the heart, is, in various respects, more aggravated, than many others that are committed, which we call actual transgressions, as the corrupt fountain is worse than the streams, or the root than the branch, or the cause than the effect. But when we consider, as at present we do Adam's sin only, as imputed, and as being antecedent to that corruption of nature, which is the immediate cause of sinful actions; or when we distinguish between original sin, as imputed and inherent, we only understand, by the former, that it cannot expose those who never committed any actual sins, to so great a degree of guilt and punishment, as the sins committed by them are said to expose them to.

And let it be farther observed, that we do not say that there is no punishment due to original sin, as imputed to us; for that would be to suppose that there is no guilt attending it, which is contrary to what we have already proved; but all our design, at present, is, to put a just difference between Adam's sin, imputed to us, and those that are committed by us. And, indeed, if what we have said under this head, be not true, the state of infants, dying in infancy, under the guilt of Adam's sin, must be equally deplorable with that of the rest of mankind; therefore, when I find some expressing themselves to this purpose, I cannot wonder that others, who deny this doctrine are offended at it. It is one thing to say, that they are exposed to no punishment at all, which none, that observe the miseries that we are liable to, from our first appearance in the world, to our leaving it, whether sooner or later, can well deny; and another thing to say, that they are exposed to the same punishment for it, as though they had actually committed it; the former we allow; the latter we must take leave to deny lest we should give occasion to any to think that the Judge of all does any thing, which carries in it the least appearance of severity, and injustice. Thus concerning the guilt of Adam's first sin, imputed to us; which leads us to consider the effects thereof. Accordingly,



2. Man is said to want that righteousness which he had at first, which is generally called, original righteousness. This is styled, the privative part of original sin, as the corruption of the human nature, and its propensity to all sin, is the positive part thereof. In considering the former of these, or man's want of original righteousness, we may observe,

(1.) That man has not wholly lost God's natural image, which he was possessed of, as an intelligent creature, consisting in his being endowed as such with an understanding, capable of some degree of the knowledge of himself and divine things; and a will, in many respects, free, *viz.* as to what concerns natural things, or some external branches of religion, or things materially good, and in his having executive powers, to act agreeably thereunto; though these are miserably defaced, and come far short of that perfection, which he had in the state in which he was first created. Some have compared this to an old decayed building, which has, by the ruins of time, lost its strength and beauty, though it retains something of the shape and resemblance of what it was before. Thus the powers and faculties of the soul are weakened, but not wholly lost, by the fall. They are like the fruits of the earth, which are shrivelled and withered in winter, and look as though they are dead; or like a man, who has out-lived himself, and has lost the vivacity and sprightliness of his parts, as well as the beauty of his body, which he formerly had.

(2.) Our ability to yield acceptable obedience to God, much more perfect obedience, is wholly lost, as being destitute of a principle of spiritual life and grace, which must, if ever we have it, be implanted in regeneration; so that every one may say with the apostle, *In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing*, Rom. vii. 18.

(3.) We are destitute of a right to the heavenly blessedness, and all those privileges, that were promised upon condition of our first parents performing perfect obedience, according to the tenor of the covenant made with them in their state of innocence.

This want of original righteousness is the immediate consequence of Adam's first sin. By original righteousness we understand, either that freedom from guilt, which man had before he sinned, which exempted him from any liableness to condemnation, and afforded him a plea before God for his retaining the blessings he was possessed of; and, had he persisted longer in his integrity, it would have given him a right to a greater degree of happiness: His perfect obedience was his righteousness, in a forensick sense; and the failure thereof, in our first parents, rendered both them and us destitute of it. But, since this is the same with what is expressed in the foregoing words, wherein we are

denominated guilty of Adam's first sin, we must consider something else, as intended in this expression, when we are said to want that righteousness wherein he was created.

We have before observed, that, by the fall of our first parents, the image of God in man was defaced : But now, we are to speak of his supernatural image, as what was wholly lost, and therefore all mankind are, by nature, destitute of a principle of grace ; upon which account it may be truly said, as the apostle does, *There is none righteous ; no, not one*, Rom. iii. 10. and elsewhere man is called, *A transgressor from the womb*, Isa. xlviii. 8. and, by nature, not only *a child of wrath*, but *dead in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. and therefore it is necessary that we be created again to good works, or that a new principle of grace be implanted in regeneration, without which there is no salvation. Our being destitute of this supernatural principle of grace is distinguished from that propensity to sin, or corruption of nature, which is spoken of in the following words of this answer ; and therefore, considering it as thus distinguished, and as called, by some, the *privative* part of original sin ; we are led to speak of man in his destitute state, deprived of that which was his glory, and tended to his defence against the assaults of temptation ; and of those actual transgressions which are the consequence thereof. This excellent endowment man is said to have lost.

Some divines express themselves with a degree of caution, when treating on this subject ; and therefore, though they allow that man has lost this righteousness, yet they will hardly own that God took it away, though it were by a judicial act, as supposing that this would argue him to be the author of sin ; and I would not blame the least degree of concern expressed to fence against such a consequence, did it really ensue on our asserting it ; yet I cannot but conclude, that the holiness of God may be vindicated, though we should assert, that he deprived him of this righteousness, as a punishment of his sin, or denied him that power to perform perfect obedience, which he conferred on him at first ; for there is a vast difference between God's restoring to him his lost power, to perform that which is truly and supernaturally good in all its circumstances ; and the infusing habits of sin into his nature : This, we acknowledge, he could not do, consistently with his holiness, and shall make it farther appear, under a following head. But the other he might do, that is, leave man destitute of a power to walk before him in holiness and righteousness ; for, if God had been obliged to have given him this power, then his bestowing it on fallen man, would be rather a debt than a grace, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. But this leads us to consider the *positive* part of original sin ; therefore,

3. Man's sinfulness, as fallen, consists in the corruption of his nature, or a propensity and inclination to all evil, which, as it is observed, is commonly called, *original sin*, that is, original sin inherent, as distinguished from it, as imputed to us, which has been already considered. That the nature of man is vitiated, corrupted, and prone to all that is bad, is taken for granted by all; and, indeed, he that denies it, must either be very much unacquainted with himself, or hardly retain the common notices which we have of moral good and evil. This is frequently represented, in scripture, as a plague, defilement, or deadly evil, with which his heart is affected; upon which account it is said, that *it is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*, Jer. xvii. 9. that *out of it proceed evil thoughts*, and all other abominations of the most heinous nature, Matth. xv. 19. unless prevented by the grace of God.

This propensity of nature to sin discovers itself in the first dawn of our reason; so that we no sooner appear to be men, but we give ground to conclude that we are sinners. Accordingly it is said, *The imagination of man's heart is only evil*, and that *from his youth*, (a) Gen. vi. 5. compared with chap. viii. 21. and he is represented as *estranged from the womb, going astray as soon as he is born, speaking lyes*, Psal. lvii. 3. which is, notwithstanding, to be understood with this limitation, that we are prone to sin, as soon as we have any dispositions, or inclinations, to any thing; for it cannot be supposed that man is disposed to commit actual sin before he is capable of acting. Some, indeed, have attempted to prove that the soul of a child sins as soon as it is united to the body in the womb, and have

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(a) Gen. vi. 5. Is a picture of antediluvian iniquity, it not only proves that guilt was universal, and all men affected; that it was general, the greater portion of the actions of men being evil; but that the depravity of every unsanctified man was total, extending not merely to his *thoughts*, but to his *imagination* יצו, the first *frame* or *form* of the thoughts. They were not partially, but *only evil*, and that not occasionally but *continually*. Yet the race who were destroyed, must have performed relative duties, parental and filial; and the tribes seem to have lived as free from war, at least, as those who have existed since the flood. If crimes before the flood exceeded in degree and multitude those of modern times, yet if they differed not in their nature, it will follow, that when the unrenewed in our days, are kind parents, dutiful children, honest men, and good citizens, they may be *totally depraved*; the "*imagination of the thoughts of their hearts may be only evil continually*." As we know not their hearts, are to judge of them by their fruits, and are charitably to impute their actions to better motives, we may with propriety commend what God will condemn. He sees the intentions, and the aversion of heart to him and holiness, and though he may reward virtuous conduct in this world, to encourage virtue, yet will eventually judge righteous judgment, and connect every action with its motives.

This scripture also shews us not only, that the *material goodness* of actions will not recommend them to God, but that *conscientiousness* in the discharge of relative duties, (for this must have existed before the flood,) will not recommend them where the love of God, which is peculiar to the renewed mind, is absent.



carried this indefensible conjecture so far, as that they have maintained, that actual sin is committed in the womb. But this is not only destitute of all manner of proof, but it seems so very absurd, that, as few will be convinced by it, so it needs no confutation.

As for this propensity to sin, (whenever it may be said to take place) it is certain, that it is not equal in all; and in this it differs from Adam's guilt, as imputed to us, and from our want of original righteousness, as the immediate consequence thereof; for these corrupt inclinations appear, from universal experience, as well as the concurrent testimony of scripture, to be of an increasing nature; so that some are more obstinate and hardened in sin than others; and the habits thereof, in many, are compared to the tincture of the *Ethiopian*, or the *leopard's spots*, Jer. xiii. 23. which no human art can take away. We are, indeed, naturally prone to sin at first; but afterwards the leprosy spreads, and the propensity, or inclination to it, increases by repeated acts, or a course of sin. The Psalmist takes notice of this, in a beautiful *climax*, or gradation; *They know not, neither will they understand, they walk in darkness*, Psal. lxxxii. 5.

We shall now take occasion to speak something concerning the rise or origin hereof. This is a difficulty which many have attempted to account for and explain, though with as little success as any thing that comes within the compass of our enquiries. Some ancient heretics \* have thought, that because it could not be from God, who is the author of nothing but what is good, that therefore there are two first causes; one of all good, which is God, and the other of all evil. But this is deservedly exploded, as a most dangerous and absurd notion.

Others seem to assert, that God is the author of it; and, that they may exculpate themselves from making him the author of sin, which is the vilest reproach that can be cast upon him, they add, that he does this in a judicial way, as a punishment for the sin of our first parents, and that it is no reflection on him to suppose, that, as a Judge, he may put this propensity to sin into our nature; so that it is, as it were, concreate with the soul, or derived to us, at the same time that it is formed in, and united to the body: But we cannot, by any means, conclude God to be the author hereof, though it be as a Judge; for that would be to suppose his vindictive justice inconsistent with the spotless purity of his nature. We read, indeed, of God's *giving men up to their own hearts' lusts*, Psal. lxxxii. 11, 12. as a punishment for other sins; but never of his producing in them an inclination to sin, though it be under the notion of a punishment: But this having been proved and illustrated, under a

\* *The Marcionites in the second century, and the Manichees in the third.*

foregoing answer; when speaking concerning the providence of God, as conversant about those actions, to which sin is annexed, in a judicial way, we shall pass it over in this place \*.

The Pelagians, and, after them, the Papists, and some among the Remonstrants, being sensible, that this propensity of nature to sin cannot be denied, have taken such a method to account for it, as makes it a very innocent and harmless thing; and, that it may appear agreeable to the notion which they maintain of the innocency of man by nature, they suppose that the first motions, or inclinations of the soul to sin, or, to use their own expression, the first acts of concupiscence are not sinful; and, to support this opinion, they maintain, that nothing can be deemed a sin, but what is committed with the full bent of the will; and therefore when an unlawful object presents itself, how much soever the mind may be pleased with it, yet there is no sin till there is an actual compliance with it; and, for this, they bring that scripture, *When lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin*, James i. 15. that is, the second act of concupiscence, or the compliance with the first suggestions to sin, are only denominated sin; and, as a consequence from this supposition, they pretend that these first acts of concupiscence were not inconsistent with a state of innocency; so that when *Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat*, Gen. iii. 6. She did not sin till she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and, as a farther consequence deduced from this supposition, they conclude, that that original righteousness, which our first parents had, did not consist so much in a perfect freedom from all suggestions to sin, but it was rather a bridle to restrain them from compliance therewith, which, by not making a right use of, they complied with the motions of concupiscence, and so sinned. And, according to this scheme, that propensity of nature to sin, which we have in our childhood, is an harmless, and innocent thing, and therefore we may suppose it to be from God, without concluding him to be the author of sin. But this is a vile and groundless notion, and such as savours more of Antinomianism, than many doctrines that are so called; and, indeed, it is to call that no sin, which is, as it were, the root and spring of all sin, and to make God the author and approver of that, which he cannot but look on with the utmost detestation, as being contrary to the holiness of his nature; to which nothing farther need be said, since the notion carries the black marks of its own infamy in itself.

There are others who oppose the doctrine of original sin, and pretend to account for the corruption of nature, by supposing that all men sinned for themselves; which is nothing else but

\* See Page 54—57, ante

reviving an old opinion taken from the schools of Plato and Pythagoras, namely, that God created the souls of all men at first, and before they were united to their bodies, at least those that now they have, sinned; and, as a punishment of their crime in that state, they were not only condemned to their respective bodies, but to suffer all the miseries which they are exposed to therein; so that the sin, which they committed in these bodies, is nothing else but the propagation of that, which had its first rise in the acts of the understanding and will, when they first fell into a state of sin. This is so chimerical an opinion, that I would not have mentioned it, had it not been maintained by some, as an expedient, to account for the corruption of nature, by those who deny original sin, and affirmed with that assurance, as though it were founded in scripture; whereas I cannot think it has the least countenance from it. They first take it for granted without sufficient ground that those scriptures, that speak of the pre-existence of Christ in his divine nature, are to be understood concerning the pre-existence of his soul; and from thence they infer, that it is reasonable to suppose, that the souls of other men pre-existed likewise. And they also strain the sense of two or three other scriptures to prove it; as when it is said, that, when God had *laid the foundation of the earth, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*, Job xxxviii. 7. where, by the *morning stars*, they understand, as others do, the *angels*; and, by the *sons of God*, they suppose, is meant the souls of men, that were then created, and untainted with sin, and, to give farther countenance to this, they explain what is said in a following verse, ver. 12. agreeably thereunto, where, when God had continued the account which he gives of his having created the world, he says, *Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born, or because the number of thy days is great*; they render the words, *Knowest thou that thou wast then born, and that the number of thy days are many*, or they depend upon the translation, which the LXX give of the text, *I know that thou wast then born, for the number of thy days is many*, that is, that thou wast then existent; for though thou knowest not what thou didst, from that time, till thou camest into the world, yet the number of thy days is great, that is, thou hadst an existence many ages before. How easy a matter it is for persons to strain the sense of some words of scripture, to serve a purpose, contrary to the general scope and design thereof, if they attempt to give countenance thereby to any doctrine of their own invention.

As for those scriptures, which they bring to prove that the Jews were of this opinion, I will not deny the inference from thence, that some of them were, as appears from the report that the disciples gave to our Saviour, when he asked them, *Whom*



*do men say that I am?* They replied, *Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets*, Matth. xvi. 13, 14. that is, they judged, according to the Pythagorean hypothesis, that the soul of *Jeremias*, or one of the prophets, dwelt in that body, which he had, and therefore that he was one of them. And there is another scripture, in which our Saviour's disciples, speaking concerning the blind man, asked him, *Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?* John ix. 2. as if he should say: Was it for some sin that this man's soul committed, before it entered into the body, to which it is united? And was his being born blind a punishment thereof? I say, I will not deny, but that some of the Jews, from hence, may be supposed to have given into this fabulous notion, agreeably to the sentiments of the philosophy, which they had been conversant in. But I will not allow that our Saviour's not confuting this absurd opinion, is an intimation; (as the defenders thereof generally conclude it to be) that he reckoned it just; but I rather think, that he passed it over, as a vulgar error, not worthy of his confutation. And as for that passage, which they quote, for this purpose, out of the apocryphal book of *Wisdom*, which is no proof of this matter from Scripture, when one is represented, as saying to this effect, that *because he was good, he came into a body undefiled*; this only proves, that this was the opinion of some of that trifling generation of men. And, when they speak of it, as what has been maintained by some of the Fathers, who received the notion from the philosophy above-mentioned, this is also as little to the purpose; and, indeed, all the other arguments that they bring, amount to nothing else but this; that, if the scripture had not given us ground to establish the contrary doctrine, there might have been, at least, a possibility of the truth of this, but to lay this as a foundation, on which they assert the truth thereof, and that with the design above-mentioned, this is nothing else, but for men to substitute their own fancies, without sufficient ground, as matters of faith, and build doctrines upon them, as though they were contained in scripture. I pass by other improvements, which they make on this fabulous notion, which still appear to be more romantic.\*

There is another attempt to account for the origin of moral evil, without inferring God to be the author of it, which has formerly been advanced by those who deny the imputation of Adam's sin; and these suppose that the soul is rendered polluted with sin, by reason of its traduction, or propagation, from the soul of the immediate parent; so that, in like manner, as the body is subject to hereditary diseases, the soul is defiled

\* See a book, supposed to be written in defence hereof, by Glanvil, entitled, *Lux Orientalis*.

with sin, as both one and the other are the consequence of their formation, according to the course of nature, in the likeness of those, from whom they immediately derive their respective beings; and they suppose that a similitude of passions, and natural dispositions in parents and children, is an argument to evince the truth hereof.

But this appears so contrary to the light of nature, and all the principles of philosophy, to suppose, that one spirit can produce another, in a natural way, and so repugnant to the ideas which we have of spirits, as simple beings, or not compounded of parts, as bodies are, that it seems almost to be universally exploded, as being destitute of any tolerable argument to support it, though it was formerly embraced by some of the Fathers.\* And they, who pretend to account for it, by the similitude of one candle's lighting another, and yet the flame remaining the same as it was before, have only made use of an unhappy method of illustration, which comes far short of a conclusive argument to their purpose. And as for the likeness of natural dispositions in children to their parents, that does not, in the least prove it; since this arises very much from the temperament of the body, or from the prejudices of education. Therefore this method to account for the origin of moral evil, being not much defended at present, we may pass it over, as a groundless conjecture.

As for Arminius, and his followers, they have very much insisted on a supposition, which they have advanced, that the universal corruption of human nature arises only from imitation. In answer to which, though I will not deny but that the progress and increase of sin, in particular persons, may be very much owing to the pernicious example of others, with whom they are conversant; yet it seems very absurd to assign this, as the first reason thereof; for it may easily be observed, that this corruption of nature, or disposition to sin, is visible in children, before they are capable of being drawn aside, by the influence of bad examples; and indeed, their being corrupted thereby, is rather the effect, than the cause of this first propensity that there is in nature to sin; and it would soon appear, that, if they never saw any thing but what is excellent or worthy to be imitated in those, under whose care they are, they would soon discover themselves, notwithstanding, prone to the contrary vices. And we may as well suppose, that wisdom, or holiness, takes its rise from imitation, in a natural way, as that sin, or folly, does so: But nothing is more common, than

\* Tertullian was of this opinion, [*Vid. ejusd. de Anima*] and Augustin, though he sometimes appears to give into the opinion of the traduction of the soul; yet, at other times, he is in great doubt about it, as ready to give it up for an indefensible opinion, *Vid. Aug. de Orig. Anim. & in Gen. ad liter lib. 10.*

for children to be very degenerate from their parents. And whatever attempts are used to instil principles of virtue into them, it is nothing else, but striving against the stream of corrupt nature, unless the grace of God interpose, and do that which imitation can never be the cause of.

Therefore we must take some other method to account for this corruption of nature, and at the same time, maintain, that the soul is from God, by immediate creation, which, though it be not so plainly contained in scripture, as other articles of faith are, yet scripture seems not to be wholly silent as to this matter : especially when God says, *Behold, all souls are mine*, Ezek. xviii. 4. and elsewhere, which is more express to this purpose, God speaks of the *souls that he made*, or created, Isa. lvii. 16. and the apostle, for this reason, styles him, *The Father of spirits*, Heb. xii. 9. and that in such a sense, as is opposed to *the fathers of the flesh*; therefore, taking this for granted, the difficulty which will recur upon us, which we are to account for, is, how can the soul, that comes out of God's immediate hand, be the subject of moral evil? To assert, that it is created guilty of Adam's first sin, or under an obligation to suffer that degree of punishment, which is due to it, is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, as will farther appear, when, under a following head, we consider what this punishment is : but to suppose that it is created by God impure, or with an inclination, or propensity to sin, cannot well be reconciled with the holiness of God.

This is what has been acknowledged by most divines, as one of the greatest difficulties that occur in the whole scheme of divinity. Some, with a becoming and religious modesty, have confessed their inability to account for it, and advise us rather to bewail, and strive against it, than to be too inquisitive about the origin and cause of it. And, indeed, this is far better, than either to darken counsel by words, without knowledge, or to advance what we cannot prove ; and I would rather chuse to acquiesce in this humble ignorance thereof, than to assert any thing which contains the least insinuation of God's being the author of it. It is certain, there are many things which we know to be true, though we cannot, at the same time, account for the manner of their being what they are, and are at a loss to determine their first original, or the natural cause thereof : Thus, though we are sure that the body is united to the soul, which acts by it, yet it is very hard to determine by what bands they are united, or how the soul moves the body, as its instrument in acting. Moreover, we know that the particles of matter are united to one another ; but it is difficult to determine what is the cause thereof. So if we enquire into the reason of the different colour, or shape of herbs and plants ; or why the grass is green, and not white or red ; no one would be blamed



if he should acknowledge himself to be at a loss to account for these, and other things of the like nature. The same may be said, if we should confess that we are at a loss to determine what is the first rise of the propensity of the nature of man to sin: nevertheless, if we keep within the bounds of modesty in our enquiries, and advance nothing contrary to the divine perfections, we may safely, and with some advantage to the doctrine of original sin, say something as to this matter, that hereby we may remove the objections that are brought, by some, against it.

Various ways have been taken, as was before observed, to account for the origin of moral evil, which we cannot acquiesce in, by reason of the many absurdities that attend them; therefore it may be more excusable for me to offer my humble thoughts about this matter, in which, I hope, I shall not much deviate from the sentiments of many, who have judiciously and happily maintained this doctrine.

There is, indeed, one conjecture, which I meet with, in a learned judicious divine, which differs very much from any account which we have of it by any other,\* namely, that the mother while the child is in the womb, having a sinful thought, impresses it on its soul, whereby it becomes polluted, in the same manner as its body is sometimes marked by the strength of her imagination: but this opinion is so very improbable, that it will hardly gain any proselytes to it; and it only discovers how willing some persons are to solve this difficulty though in an uncommon method, as being apprehensive that others have not sufficiently done it.

But, that we may account for this matter in the most unexceptionable way, which does not in the least, infer God to be the author of sin nor overthrow the doctrine of imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, we must consider this propensity of nature, or inclination that there is in the souls of men to sin as a corrupt habit, and therefore that it is not infused by God; and consequently though the soul, in its first creation, is guilty, that is, liable to suffer the punishment due to it for Adam's sin imputed, yet it does not come defiled out of the hands of God; or, as one well expresses it,† “ We are not to think that

\* *Vid. Pictet. Theol. Chr. Lib. V. cap. 7. Absit ut animam creati impuram dicamus, cum nihil impurum e Dei manibus prodire possit.—Dum infans est in utero matris, cum intime ei conjungatur, objecta in ejus cerebrum easdem impressiones efficiunt, ac in matris cerebrum.—Hoc patet ex eo quod contingit mulieribus pregnantibus; cum enim avide inspicunt aliquid, vel rubro, vel flavo colore, vel pallido tinctum, contingit sepiissime ut infantes quos in utero gestant, tali colore tincti nascantur. Ita intime corpus & animam uniri, ut ad motum corporis, ceræ oriantur in mente cogitationes.—Motus, qui sunt in cerebro infantium idem præstare in illis, ac in matribus, nempe eorum animam recens creatam rebus sensibilibus & carnalibus alligare; unde videmus infantium animas omnia ad se & ad suum referre corpus.*

† See Du Moulin's *Anatomy of Arminianism*, Chap. X. § 3, 15, 17.

“ God put original sin into men’s souls ; for how should he  
 “ punish those souls, which he himself had corrupted ? And he  
 “ adds, that it is a great wickedness to believe that God put into  
 “ the soul an inclination to sin ; though it is true God creates  
 “ the souls of men destitute of heavenly gifts, and supernatural  
 “ light, and that justly because Adam lost those gifts for him-  
 self and his posterity.”

Another judicious divine \* expresses himself to this purpose ; that, though the soul is created spotless, yet it is destitute of original righteousness, as a punishment of Adam’s first sin ; and accordingly he distinguishes between a soul’s being pure, so as the soul of Adam was when it was first created, that is to say, not only sinless, but having habits, or inclinations in its nature, which inclined it to what was good ; and its being created with a propensity, or inclination to evil, which he, with good reason denies ; and, as a medium between both those extremes, in which the truth lies, observes, that the soul is created, by God, destitute of original righteousness, unable to do what is truly good ; and yet, having no positive inclination, or propensity in nature, to what is evil ; this is plainly the sense of his words, which I have inserted in the margin.

Now if it be enquired, how this corrupt habit, or inclination to sin, is contracted ? the corruption of nature necessarily ensues on the privation of original righteousness. Some have illustrated this by an apt similitude, taken from the travellers wandering out of his way, or taking a wrong path, as occasioned by the darkness of the night, in which his want of light is the occasion, though not properly the cause of his wandering. Thus man is destitute of original righteousness, or those habits of supernatural grace, which are implanted in regeneration ; and what can be the consequence thereof, but that his first actions, as soon as he is capable of doing good or evil, must contain in them nothing less than a sin of omission, or a defect of, and disinclination to, what is good ? and, by this means, the soul becomes defiled, or inclined to sin ; so that we first suppose it indisposed to what is good, and that this arises from its being destitute of supernatural grace, which it lost by Adam’s fall,

\* See Turret. Instit. Theol. Elenct. Tom. I. Loc. 9. Q. 12. § 8, 9. *Licet anima sine ulla labe creetur a Deo, non creatur tamen cum iustitia originali, qualis anima Adam, ad imaginem Dei ; sed cum ejus carentia in pœnam primi peccati. Ut hic distinguendum sit inter animam puram, impuram, & non puram. Illa pura dicitur, quæ ornata est habitu sanctitatis ; impura, quæ contrarium habitum injustitiæ habet ; non pura, quæ licet nullum habeat habitum bonum, nullum tamen habet malum. sed creatur simpliciter cum facultatibus naturalibus ; qualis supponitur creari a Deo post lapsum, quia imago Dei amissa semel per peccatum, non potest amplius restitui, nisi regenerationis beneficio per Spiritum Sanctum. Quamvis autem anima creetur a Deo destituta iustitia originali ; non propterea Deus potest censeri author peccati, quia aliud est impuritatem infundere, aliud puritatem non dare, quæ homo se indigne reddidit in Adamo.*

and that God may deny this grace, without supposing him to be the author of sin; for he was not obliged to continue that to Adam's posterity, which he forfeited, and lost for them. And that which follows, from hence, is, that the heart of man, by a continuance in sin after it is first tainted with it, grows worse and worse, and more inclined to it than before. This I cannot better illustrate, than by comparing it to a drop of poison, injected into the veins of a man, which will by degrees corrupt the whole mass of blood.

As to what concerns the body, to which the soul was united, as giving occasion to these corrupt habits being contracted thereby, some have compared this to sweet oil's being infected by a musty vessel, into which it is put; so the soul, created good, and put into a corrupt body, receives contagion from thence: and this conjunction of the pure soul with a corrupt body, is a just punishment of Adam's sin. Thus a very learned and excellent divine accounts for this matter;\* though this similitude does not indeed illustrate this matter in every circumstance, inasmuch as that tincture, which is received from a vessel in a physical way, cannot well agree with the corruption of the soul, which is of a moral nature; but yet I would make this use of it, as to observe what daily experience suggests, namely, that the constitution, or temperament of the body, has a very great influence on the soul, and is an occasion of various inclinations to sin, in which it acts, in an objective way. Therefore when we suppose a soul united to a body, that, according to the frame and constitution of its nature has a tendency to incline it to sin, and this soul is deprived of those supernatural habits, which would have fenced it against this contagion; what can ensue from hence, but that corruption of nature, whereby men are inclined to what is evil? which inclination increases daily, till men arrive to the most rooted habits and dispositions to all that is bad, and are, with more difficulty, reclaimed from it. This leads us to consider,

IV. The conveyance of original sin, from our first parents to their posterity, by natural generation, or how we are said to be born in sin. It is not the sin of our immediate parents that is imputed to us, for they stand in no other relation, but as natural, and not federal heads of their posterity; therefore the meaning of that answer, in which this doctrine is contained, is only this, that original sin is conveyed to us, by our immediate parents, with our being; so that, as we are born men, we are born sinners. Now, that we may consider this in consistency with what has been before laid down nothing can be inferred, from hence, but that the guilt of Adam's first sin is conveyed to us with our being, and that habitual inclination that we have,

\* See Perkins on the Creed.



which we call a propensity of nature to sin, is the consequence hereof; so that what our Saviour says, is a great truth, *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, John iii. 6. or every one that is born of sinful parents, will, as soon as he is capable thereof, be prone to sin. And this leads us to consider,

What is objected against what has been before laid down, in explaining this doctrine as though it were inconsistent with the sense of several scriptures, which speak of sin, as derived from our immediate parents. For the understanding of which, in general, let it be considered, that no sense of any scripture is true, that casts the least reflection on the divine perfections. If we could but prove, that our souls were propagated by our immediate parents, as our bodies are, there would be no difficulty in allowing the sense the objectors give of several scriptures, from whence they attempt to account for the corruption of nature in a different way, since God would not then be the immediate author thereof. But, supposing the soul to be created by God, we must take some other method to account for the sense of some scriptures, which are brought in opposition to the foregoing explication of the origin of moral evil.

The first scripture, which is generally brought against it, is, in Psal. li. 5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*; the meaning of which is, I was conceived, and born guilty of sin, with an inability to do what is good, and in such a state, that actual sin would necessarily ensue, as soon as I was capable of committing it, which would bring with it a propensity to all manner of sin. And that David had a sense of guilt, as well as the pollution of nature, is plain, from several verses of this Psalm; especially in ver. 9, 14. It is therefore as though he should say, I was a guilty creature, as soon as I was conceived in the womb; and left of God, and so sin has the ascendant over me. I was conceived a sinner by imputation, under the guilt of Adam's first sin; and to this I have added much more guilt, and lately that of blood-guiltiness. So that though he is said to have been *shapen in iniquity*, it does not necessarily follow, that his soul was created with infused habits of sin. Whatever the parents are the cause of, with respect to this corruption and pollution, let it be attributed to them; but far be it from us to say, that God is the cause thereof.

Again, it is said, in Job xiv. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? no not one*. It is no strain upon the sense of this text, to suppose, that by *unclean*, he means guilty; and by *cleanness*, innocency, as opposed to it; for, in most places of this book, it is so taken, that is, in a forensick sense; and therefore, why not in this? And, if so, then it is not at all inconsistent with the above-mentioned explication of this doc-

trine. See chap. xi. 4. *I am clean in thine eyes, that is, guiltless*; otherwise Zophar's reply to him would not have been so just, when he saith, *God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth*; and, in chap. xv. 14. *What is man, that he should be clean? and he, that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* where, to be *righteous*, seems to be exegetical of being *clean*; and both of them, being taken in a forensick sense, it agrees well with what Job is often reproved for, by his friends, namely, boasting too much of his righteousness, or cleanness: thus he says, in chap. xxxiii. 9. *I am clean without transgression, neither is there iniquity in me*; that is, I am not so guilty, as to deserve such a punishment, as he inflicts: *He findeth occasions against me*, &c. Surely, *cleanness* here is the same with innocence, as opposed to guilt; and, in chap. ix. 30. *If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean*; this plainly implies, that if he should pretend himself guiltless, yet he could not answer the charge which God would bring against him, neither could they *come together in judgment*, ver. 32. Now, if this be so frequently, if not always, the sense of *clean*, in other places of this book, why may not we take the sense of these words, *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*, to be this; that a guilty child is born of a guilty parent, which will be accompanied with uncleanness, and it will be prone to sin, as soon as it is capable thereof?

Another scripture, which we bring to prove original sin, is in Gen. vi. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man, is only evil continually*. Why may not we understand it thus? The imagination of the thoughts are evil, as soon as there are imaginations, or thoughts, though not before. And this rather respects the corruption of nature, than the first rise of it; and so does that parallel scripture; in Gen. viii. 21. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth*; q. d. Sin increases with the exercise of reason.

And, in Psal. lviii. 3. *The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies*. This agrees well enough with what we have said concerning their separation from God, from the womb, from whence arises actual sin; so that they *speak lies*, as soon as they are capable of it.

There is also another scripture, usually brought to prove original sin, which is to be understood in a sense, not much unlike that which we but now mentioned, viz. Isa. xlvi. 8. *Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb*. This doth not overthrow what we have said; for a person may be a transgressor, as it were, from the womb, and yet the soul not have a propensity to sin implanted in it by God, in its first creation.

Again, in Gen. v. 3. *Adam begat a son in his own likeness*,

that is, a fallen creature, involved in guilt, and liable to the curse, like himself; and that would be like him, in actual sin, when capable of it, born in *his image*, as having lost the *divine image*.

Again, in John iii. 6. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh.* We may understand this, that every one that is born of sinful parents, is a sinner, destitute of the Spirit of God, which is a great truth. But surely our Saviour did not design hereby to signify, that any one is framed by God with a propensity of sin; which is all that we militate against in this head. (a)

V. The last thing to be considered, is, that all actual transgressions proceed from original sin. These are like so many streams that flow from this fountain of corruption; the one discovers to us what we are by nature; the other, what we are by practice; and both afford us matter for repentance, and great humiliation, in the sight of God. But since we shall have occasion to enlarge on that part of this subject, which more especially relates to actual transgressions, with their respective aggravations, in some following answers,\* we pass it over at present; and shall conclude this head with some practical inferences from what has been said, concerning the corruption of our nature, as being the spring of all actual transgressions.

1. We ought to put a due difference between the first discoveries there are of this corruption of our nature in our infancy, and that which arises from a course, or progress in sin; the latter has certainly greater aggravations in it than the former, and is like a spark of fire, blown up into a flame. Accord-

\* See *Quest. cv.—cli.*

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(a) The mind of man is as open to the view of God, as our words or actions are; the intention is ordinarily the seat of guilt; for the merely physical action of the body deserves neither praise nor blame; the Lord is able not only to detect, but to punish in every instance such guilt; his justice therefore requires that he should exercise such power.

To prefer the creatures to the Creator, is to deny his superior excellency, and that he is the source from whence we have derived the good which we possess; it is to give the honour which is due to him, unto others; it is a robbery committed on him; it is a revolting from his allegiance, and treason, which ought to be punished.

It is an evidence that we have no love for him, when we desire communion and acquaintance with other objects on their own account. It is a proof of enmity against him, for we cannot at the same time fix our highest affections on sensual pursuits and on holiness; and an attachment to the former evinces hatred of the latter; and so an aversion to an holy God. If we are enemies to God, Omnipotence must and will prevail, nor can he suffer in the universe, his enemies to be finally prosperous, possessing still their enmity.

Where there exists not the love of God, there is no obedience to his laws, for this is the principle of obedience; all the good deeds of such are but a semblance of holiness, and must be rejected by him who views the motive with the action. Disobedience to his laws is to be punished with death, the implied penalty of all divine laws; and the least punishment that the magnitude of an offence against an infinite Majesty can admit.



dingly, it is our duty, as the apostle says, to *exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any be hardened*, that is, lest this corruption of nature be increased, *through the deceitfulness of sin*, Heb. iii. 13.

2. Let us carefully distinguish between being born innocent, which the Pelagians affirm, and we deny, and being born defiled with sin, and so having a propensity of nature to it, as soon as we have a being; or let us more especially take heed that we do not charge this on God, as though he were the author thereof, as well as of our being, as though it were infused by him, and not acquired by us.

3. Since this corruption of nature so early discovers itself, and abides in us, as long as we are in this world, let us take heed that we do not use means to increase it, by giving way to presumptuous sins; or endeavour to excite or draw it forth, either in ourselves, or others; for this will occasion abundance of actual transgressions.

Thus having considered that guilt which we bring with us into the world, and that corruption of nature, which discovers itself, as soon as we appear to be intelligent creatures, or are capable of any disposition to sin; we proceed to speak concerning the misery and punishment that ensues hereupon.

**QUEST. XXVII.** *What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?*

**ANSW.** The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse, so as we are, by nature, children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

**H**AVING considered the doctrine of original sin, as imputed to, and inherent in us, we are now led to speak concerning the miseries that are consequent hereupon, or the punishment that is due to it. And, inasmuch as the former of these is equal in all; and the latter increases, in proportion to that degree of obstinacy, and hardness of heart, which discovers itself in all ages, and conditions of life, and it is attended with greater guilt, as it is more deeply rooted in us, and gains very great strength by actual sin; it is necessary for us to consider the punishment due to original sin, as such, and how it differs from a greater degree thereof, which is due to its increasing guilt. The former of these is not distinguished from the latter, by many who treat on this subject; which gives occasion to some, who deny original sin, to represent it in the most terrible view, as though there were no difference between

the wrath of God, that infants are exposed to, and that which is inflicted on the most obdurate sinner: but, that we may remove prejudices against this doctrine, and set it in a just light, we shall consider the punishment due to original sin, in both these respects.

I. The punishment due to original sin, as such, namely, in those who are charged with no other guilt, but that of Adam's first sin. This more especially respects those that die in their infancy, before they are capable of making any addition to it. Concerning these, I cannot but conclude with Augustin, in his defence of original sin against the Pelagians, that the punishment thereof is the most mild of any, and cannot be reckoned so great, as that it might be said of them, that *it had been better for them not to have been born.\**

That this may farther appear, let it be considered, that the punishment due to actual sin, or the corruption of nature increased thereby, is attended with accusations of conscience, inasmuch as the guilt, that is contracted by it, arises from the opposition of the will to God; and the alienation of the affections from him, is oftentimes attended with rebellion, against a great degree of light, and many other aggravations, taken from the engagements which we are under to the contrary, and is persisted in with obstinacy, against all those checks of conscience, and means used to prevent it; and, in proportion to the degree thereof, they, who contract this guilt, are said, as our Saviour speaks of the scribes and Pharisees, to be liable to the *greater damnation*, Matt. xxiii. 14. and the prophet Jeremiah speaks of some of the greatest opposers of his message, as those who should be destroyed with *double destruction*, Jer. xvii. 18. This is certainly a greater degree of punishment, than that which is due to original sin, as such; and, with respect to these, there are oftentimes many sad instances of the wrath of God breaking in upon the conscience, as he says by the Psalmist, that he would *reprove them, and set their iniquities in order before their eyes*, Psal. l. 21. and what our Saviour says elsewhere, concerning the *worm that dieth not*, Mark ix. 44. is to be applied to them. But this punishment does not belong to those who have no other guilt, but that of Adam's sin, imputed to them.

If this can be made appear, as, I hope, we shall be able to do, it may have a tendency to remove some prejudices, which many entertain against the doctrine of original sin, who express themselves with such an air of insult, as though they were opposing a doctrine which is contrary to the dictates of human

\* See *Aug. contra Julianum, Lib. V. cap. 8. Ego non dico, parvulos sine baptismo Christi morientes tanta pena esse plectendos; ut eis non nasci potius expedit. Et ejusd. de peccat. merit. & remis. Lib. I. cap. 16. Potest proinde recte dici, parvulos sine baptismo de corpore exeuntes, in damnatione omnium mitissima futuros.*

nature, as well as represents God, as exercising the greatest severity against those who are chargeable with no other sin than this; and they generally lay hold on some unwary expressions, contributing very little to the defence of this doctrine, which might as well have been spared; for they are no less exceptionable, though prefaced with an apology, for the want of pity, which such like unguarded expressions seem to contain in them, when they say, that their milder thoughts, concerning this matter, will do those infants, who are tormented in hell, no good, as their severer ones can do them no prejudice. We may therefore be allowed to make a farther enquiry into this matter, especially when we consider, that those, who die in infancy, will appear, at the last day, to have been a very considerable part of mankind. And some tender parents have had a due concern of spirit about their future state, and would be very glad, were it possible for them, to have some hopes concerning the happiness thereof.

Various have been the conjectures of divines about it. The Pelagians, and those who verge towards their scheme, have concluded, that they are all saved, as supposing that they are innocent, and not, in the least concerned in Adam's sin: but this is to set aside the doctrine we are maintaining; and therefore, I cannot think their reasoning, in this respect very conclusive.

Others, who do not deny original sin, suppose, notwithstanding, that the guilt thereof is atoned for, by the blood of Christ. This would be a very agreeable notion, could it be proved; and all that I shall say, in answer to it, is, that it wants confirmation. As for those who suppose, with the Papists, that the guilt of original sin is washed away by baptism, as some of the fathers have also asserted, this has so many absurd consequences attending it, that I need not spend time in opposing it; one of them is, that it makes that, which, at most, is but a sign or ordinance, for our faith, in which we hope for the grace of regeneration to be the natural means of conferring it, which is contrary to the design of all the ordinances, which God has appointed: but, passing by this, which will afford little foundation for hope.

Others have concluded, that all the infants of believing parents, dying in infancy, are saved, as supposing that they are interested in the covenant of grace, in which God promises, that he will be a God to believers, and their seed. This would be a very comfortable thought, to those who have hope concerning their own state. But I cannot find that this argument is sufficiently maintained; since it seems very evident, that all such like promises rather respect the external, than the saving blessings of the covenant of grace.

Others therefore conclude, (as many good and pious Christians have done, that when they have been enabled, by an act



of faith, in which they have enjoyed some sensible experience of the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, to give up their infant-seed to Christ, whether it be in baptism, or not) from the frame of their own spirit, and the evidence they have had of the power of God, exciting this act of faith, that God would own that grace which he hath enabled them to exercise, and consequently that he has accepted of this solemn act of dedication of them to him, which has given them comfortable and quieting thoughts about the salvation of their infant-seed. This is not only an excellent method, used by them, but it seems to be as just a way of reasoning about the salvation of those who die in infancy, as any that is generally made use of; and, it may be, David might infer the salvation of his child, when he says, *I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me*, 2 Sam. xii. 23. from some such method as this. But, since these are uncommon instances of faith, and such as every sincere Christian has not always been found in the exercise of, I would hope, that there are multitudes of infants saved, concerning whom we have no certain ground to determine who they are; and why may not we suppose, that there are many of them, who belong to the election of grace, that are not the seed of believing parents? However, notwithstanding all the pious and kind thoughts, which the conjectures of men suggest, we must be content to leave this, as a secret that belongs to God, and not unto us to know.

Therefore all that I shall attempt, at present, is, to prove, that if all, who die in their infancy, are not saved, yet their condemnation is not like that which is due to actual sin, or those habits thereof, which are contracted by men. And here it must be allowed, pursuant to our former method of reasoning, that, if they are not saved, they have the punishment of loss inflicted on them; for the right to the heavenly blessedness, which Adam forfeited and lost, respected not only himself, but all his posterity. Whether they have any farther degree of punishment inflicted on them, or how far they are liable to the punishment of sense, I dare not pretend to determine. I do not care to conclude, with some of the Remonstrants, such as Episcopius, Curcellæus, and others, that they always remain in an infantine state, or, that they have no more ideas in the other world, than they had in this; for this is to suppose what cannot be proved. Besides, if they always remain in this state, this must be supposed, either to be the consequence of nature, and argued from their want of ideas, while they were in this world, or else it must be by a particular dispensation of providence, respecting some infants in the next, and not all. To suppose the former, is to suppose that none are saved, since remaining in an infantile state, is not salva-

tion; for it is beyond dispute, the soul that is saved, whether it went out of the world an infant, or a man is exceedingly enlarged, and rendered receptive of the heavenly blessedness. And if, on the other hand, they suppose, that their remaining in this infantile state, is by a particular dispensation of providence, this, was it true, would be a small punishment, indeed, inflicted on them for Adam's sin: But we have as little, or less ground to conclude this, than that all infants are saved; and therefore I cannot give into this notion, which, indeed, differs but little from that of the Papists, who suppose them, if dying unbaptized, to remain in a state of insensibility; which is no other, than an ungrounded conjecture. And, as for the account which we have, in some of their writings concerning the place allotted for them, which they call *Limbus Infantium*, and its situation between heaven and hell, this is no better than a theological romance; and it cannot but be reckoned trifling and ludicrous, and nothing else but an imposing their own fancies, as articles of faith.

I dare not, indeed, allow myself to be too peremptory, or give my thoughts too great a loose on this subject: but, since it is taken for granted by all, who give into the doctrine of original sin, that infants, if not saved, are liable to the punishment of loss, which has been before considered, as the immediate consequence of the imputation of Adam's sin; yet it doth not appear, to me, that they have such a tormenting sense of the greatness of their loss, as others have who were adult, and had received the knowledge of divine things, which infants are not capable of. These, as it is more than probable, carry the ideas, which they had received of divine things, out of the world with them, which infants cannot be said to do; and therefore, if ever they have the knowledge thereof, and consequently of the glory of the heavenly state, it must be by extraordinary revelation. How far they may be led into this matter, by observing the glorious work, which shall be performed in the most visible manner, in the day of judgment, I pretend not to determine. This, indeed, will give them some apprehensions of the happiness which others are possessed of, and they are excluded from: But even this cannot have so great a tendency to enhance their misery, as when hardened and presumptuous sinners, who have despised and neglected the means of grace, are said, as our Saviour speaks to the Jews, *To see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and they themselves thrust out*, Luke xiii. 28. as intimating, that this will, in a judicial way, be a means to enhance their misery; and consequently they cannot but have such a tormenting sense thereof, as what will make their loss appear greater, and so

render them more miserable than infants can be, who never had these means of grace in this world.

But, because it is not safe to be too peremptory as to this matter, all that I shall farther observe is, that whatever conceptions they may have of the happiness, which they are not possessed of, yet they shall not have that part of the punishment of sin, which consists in self-reflection, on the dishonour that they have brought to God or the various aggravations of sin committed, which is a very great degree of the punishment of sin in hell; and therefore, when the wrath of God is said to break in on the consciences of men, whereby, in a judicial way, sins, before committed, are brought to remembrance, and the means of grace, which they have neglected, cannot but occasion the greatest distress and misery, this is certainly a punishment that infants cannot be liable to; and, if the condition of the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon is represented by our Saviour, as *more tolerable than that of Capernaum*, so in proportion the condemnation of infants, who have no other guilt but that of original sin, will be more tolerable than that of the heathen, inasmuch as they had no natural capacities of doing good or evil. And this is all that I pretend to determine, which amounts to no more than this, that, since punishment must be proportioned to the crime; as they are liable only to the guilt of Adam's sin, which is much less than being liable to it, with those other transgressions that proceed from it, therefore their punishment must be less than that of any others. This, I think, may safely be asserted: and, if we proceed no farther in our enquiries about this matter, but confess our ignorance of many things relating to the state and capacity of separate souls, it will be more excuseable, than for us to pretend to a greater degree of knowledge, than is consistent with our present state.

II. We shall consider the punishment due to original sin, when attended with many actual sins, proceeding from a nature defiled, and prone to rebel against God. This is greater or less, in proportion to the habits of sin contracted, as will be more particularly considered, when we speak of the aggravations of sin, and its desert of punishment.\* We shall therefore, at present, speak to it in the method in which it is laid down in this answer.

1. By the fall of our first parents, all mankind lost communion with God. This was enjoyed at first; for God having made man, with faculties capable of this privilege, designed to converse with him; and, indeed, this was one of the blessings promised in the covenant, which he was under, and it was a kind of prelibation of the heavenly state; therefore it follows,

\* See Quest. cli. clii.



that the fall of our first parents could not but first expose themselves, and then their posterity, to the loss of this privilege ; and, indeed, this was the more immediate result of sin committed, and guilt hereby contracted. It is a reflection on the divine perfections to suppose that God will have communion with sinners, while they remain in a state of rebellion against him ; or that he will love and manifest himself to them, and admit them into his presence, as friends and favourites, unless there be a Mediator who engages to repair the injury offered to the holiness and justice of God, and secure the glory of his perfections, in making reconciliation for sin, and thereby bringing them into a state of friendship with God : But this privilege man had no right to, or knowledge of when first he fell, and consequently God and man could not *walk together*, as *not being agreed*, Amos iii. 3. God was obliged, in honour, to withdraw from him, and thereby testify his displeasure against sin, as he tells his people, *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God ; and your sins have hid his face from you*, Isa. lix. 2.

This consequence of sin is judicial ; and, at the same time, through the corruption of nature, as the result of that enmity against God, which follows on our fallen state, man is farther considered, as not desiring to converse with God : His guilt inclined him to fly from him, as a sin-revenging Judge ; and his loss of God's supernatural image, consisting in holiness of heart and life, rendered him disinclined, yea, averse to this privilege ; so that, as he was separate from the presence of God, he desired to have nothing more to do with him, which is the immediate result of his sinful and fallen state.

2. Man, by his fall, was exposed to the divine displeasure, or to the wrath of God, in which respect, as the apostles says, we are, *by nature children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. by which we are not to understand, as some do, who deny the guilt and punishment of original sin, that nothing is intended hereby, but that we are inclined to wrath as signifying those depraved and corrupt passions, whereby we are prone to hate God, and holiness, which is his image in man, which is rather the consequence of original sin, and discovers what we are by practice, whereas this text speaks of what we are by nature ; and it seems a very great strain and force on the sense of the word, when some understand this mode of speaking, that we are children of wrath only by custom, which according to the proverbial expression is a second nature ; or as tho' it only signified the temper of their minds, or their behaviour towards one another, as giving way to their passions as the apostle says, *that they lived in malice and envy, and hated one another*, Tit. iii. 3. as though it denoted only the effects of the corruption

of nature, not their liableness to the wrath of God due to it; whereas it is plain, that the apostle makes use of an hebraism, very frequently occurring in scripture, both in the Old and New Testament; as when a person, that is guilty of a capital crime, and liable to suffer death, is called, *A son of death*: so our Saviour calls Judas, who was liable to perdition, *A son of perdition*, John xvii. 12. so here *children of wrath* are those that were liable to the wrath of God, by which we are to understand that punishment, which is the demerit of sin; not that wrath is a passion in God, as it is in us; but it signifies either his will to punish, or his actual inflicting punishment on them, in proportion to the crimes committed, whereby he designs to glorify his holiness. If this be meant by the punishment due to all mankind, as they come into the world with the guilt of the sin of our first parents, in which respect guilt denotes a liableness to punishment and all punishment contains some degree of wrath; I say, if this be the meaning of their being so by nature, I am far from denying it. For the only thing that I have militated against, is, the supposition, that the punishment due to original sin imputed, bears an equal proportion to that of guilt contracted, whereby the nature of man is rendered more depraved, by a continuance in sin; and therefore I cannot but acquiesce in that explication given hereof by the learned Beza, who is a most strenuous defender of original sin,\* who, when he speaks of men as children of wrath, *by nature*, as all mankind are included herein, understands this, not as referring to the human nature, as created by God, but as corrupted by its compliance with the suggestions of Satan; and therefore we suppose, that as the corruption of nature is daily increased, whatever punishment is due to it, at first, there is notwithstanding a greater condemnation, which it is exposed to, as the consequence of sin committed and continued in; and this is described, in scripture, in such a way, as renders it, beyond expression, dreadful; *Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath*, Psal. xc. 11. or, as the prophet says, *Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger*, Nah. i. 6.

3. Man, as fallen, is exposed to the curse of God, which is an external declaration of his hatred of sin, and will to punish it, which we sometimes call the condemning sentence of the law, as the apostle says, *As many as are of the works of the law, are under a curse as it is written, Cursed is every one that*

\* Vid Beza. in loc. Ubique Ira est, ibi & peccatum; quo sine exceptione involvi totam humanam gentem idem testatur, Rom. i. 18. Sed naturam tamen intellige non quatenus creata est, verum quatenus per Diaboli suggestionem corrupta est in seipsam.

*continuet* not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. so that whatever threatnings there are by which God discovers his infinite hatred of sin, these we are liable to as the consequence of our fallen state; and accordingly, as we were, at first, separate from God, the sin of our nature tends, according to the various aggravations thereof, to make the breach the wider, and our condemnation much greater.

4. By the fall, we became bond-slaves to Satan: thus it is said, that *the devil has the power of death*, Heb. ii. 14. and sinners are described, as *walking according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. and he is elsewhere described, as *a strong man armed, who keeps the palace, till a stronger than he shall overcome him, and take from him all his armour*, Luke xi. 21, 22. The heart of man is the throne in which he reigns, and men are naturally inclined to yield themselves slaves to him, and corrupt nature gives him the greatest advantage against us. None of us can say, as our Saviour did, *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*, John xiv. 30. for we are as ready to comply, as he is to tempt, especially if not prevented by the grace of God, and therefore may well be said to be bond-slaves to him. No age, or condition of life, is exempted from his assaults, and he suits his temptations to our natural tempers, and hereby we are overcome, and more and more enslaved by him; and certainly this must be a state of misery, and that more especially, because such are enemies to Christ, and withdraw themselves from his service, despising his protection, and the rewards he has promised to his faithful servants; and our Saviour says, that *we cannot serve two masters*, Mat. vi. 24. and so long as we continue bond-slaves to Satan, we contract greater guilt, and the dominion of sin increases therewith; so that to be the servants of Satan, is to be the servants of sin; and we are herein miserable, in that we serve one who intends nothing but our ruin, and is pleased in all steps leading to it, and will be as ready to accuse, torment, and make us more miserable in the end, as he is to solicit or desire our service, or as we can be to obey him. Let us therefore use our utmost endeavours, that we may be free from this bondage and servitude; and accordingly let us consider,

(1.) That Satan has no right to our service. Though he be permitted to rule over the children of disobedience; yet he has no divine grant, or warrant for it, to render it lawful for him to demand it, or us to comply therewith, and he is no other than an usurper, and declared enemy to the king of heaven; and,



though sinners are suffered to give themselves up to him, this is far from being by divine approbation; therefore,

(2.) Let us professedly renounce, groan under, and endeavour, through the grace of God to withdraw ourselves from his service, whenever we are led captive by him, and not be his willing slaves, to obey him with our free consent, or out of choice, and with pleasure; and, in order hereunto,

(3.) Let us list ourselves into Christ's service, put ourselves under his protection, and desire his help, against the wiles and fiery darts of the devil.

(4.) Let us improve the proclamation of liberty made in the gospel, and rejoice in it, as the most desirable blessing, *If the Son make you free, then shall ye be free indeed*, John viii. 36.

The last thing observed in this answer, is, that, as fallen creatures we are justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come; by which we are to understand, not only the consequences of original sin, imputed to, but inherent in us, and increased by that guilt which we daily contract, which exposes the sinner to punishment in both worlds, in proportion to the aggravations thereof. This we are led to speak to, in the two following answers. (a)

(a) It has been frequently objected, if they that are in the flesh be dead in sin, or so wholly inclined to evil, that they "*cannot please God*," they must be viewed as miserable rather than guilty, as objects of pity rather than subjects for punishment.

To analyse is to enervate this objection. Wherein consists the impotency, and what is the guilt of an evil action? If there be any physical defect in the understanding, or any external obstacle, which may prevent a conformity to the revealed will of God; it is an excuse, the party is clear: but this inability is of a different kind; the sensual heart is prevailingly inclined to the objects of time and sense, and the mind possesses no ability to resist its strongest inclination, which is but the common case of every deliberate choice. Evil men cannot see, because they shut their eyes; they cannot hear, because they stop their ears; they cannot come to Christ, or, which is the same thing, will not apply to him by faith. They persevere in such opposition until death or despair fixes their enmity; except their wills are changed, and they are drawn by divine grace.

The guilt of an evil action, depends not upon, or exists not in the mere action of the body; otherwise brutes, and machines of wood and metal, would be subjects of blame. The guilt is seated in the intention, and lies in the inclination of the mind to that which is prohibited; and the habitual preponderancy of the inclinations to evil, marks a worse character, than a sudden and individual choice of it.

If the prevailing desires of that which is evil, be the only impotency of the state of death in sin, and at the same time the only guilt of the party; this inability and guilt are concomitant, and always in exact proportion to each other; or rather may be considered as the same thing, under different aspects and names: it results therefore that as certainly as vice is not virtue, the impotency to good of the unrenewed man, is no excuse for his guilt.

QUEST. XXVIII. *What are the punishments of sin in this world?*

ANSW. The punishments of sin in this world, are either inward as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, together with death itself.

QUEST. XXIX. *What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?*

ANSW. The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission, in hell-fire for ever.

I. **I**N the former of these answers, we have an account of those punishments which sin exposes men to in this world. These are distinguished as being either inward or outward, personal or relative; of which, those that are styled *outward*, which more especially respect our condition in the world, as we are liable to many adverse dispensations of providence therein, and are generally reckoned, by sinners, the greatest, as they are most sensible while they groan under the many evils and miseries which befall them, in their bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, and they end in death, the most formidable of all evils; though, in reality, the punishments of sin, which are styled *inward*, such as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, &c. how little soever they are regarded by those who fall under them, by reason of that stupidity, which is the natural consequence thereof: yet they are, by far, the greatest and most dreaded by all, who truly fear God, and see things in a just light being duly affected with that which would render them most miserable in the end.

Here we shall consider,

*First*, Those punishments that are called inward, which respect either the understanding, will, conscience, or affections. Accordingly,

1. We are said to be exposed to blindness of mind: This the apostle describes in a most moving way, when he speaks of the *Gentiles*, as *walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart*, Eph. iv. 17, 18. Ignorance and error are defects of the understanding, whereby it is not able to find out, nor desirous to enquire after the way of truth and peace; and accordingly the apostle says, *The way of peace have they not known,*

Rom. iii. 17. and by reason hereof, we are naturally inclined to deny those doctrines, which are of the greatest importance, namely, such as more immediately concern the glory of God, and our own salvation. This ignorance is certainly most dangerous, and cannot be exempted from the charge of sin, much more when we are judicially left to it, as a punishment for other sins committed by us.

2. Another punishment of sin, mentioned in this answer, is strong delusion, which is the consequence of the former. This is taken from the apostle's words, *For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie*, 2 Thess. ii. 11. the meaning of which is nothing else but this, that God suffers them, who receive not the love of the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness, to be deluded, by denying them that spiritual and saving illumination, which would have effectually prevented it. Now, that we may consider what the apostle means by these *strong delusions*, we may observe, that every error, or mistake in lesser matters of religion, is not intended hereby; for then few or none, would be exempted from this judgment; but it includes in it a person's entertaining the most abominable absurdities in matters of religion, which are contrary to the divine perfections, and the whole tenor of scripture, and subversive of those truths, which are of the greatest importance; or, when persons pretend to revelations, or are turned away from the truth by giving credit to the amusements of signs, and lying wonders; with which Antichrist is said to come, *after the working of Satan*; and the consequence hereof is, that *they believe a lie*, which they suppose to be confirmed hereby.

Errors, in matter of religion, are sometimes invincible and unavoidable, for want of objective light, or scripture-revelation, as in the Heathen, Mahometans, and others, who through the disadvantages and prejudices of education, are estranged from the truth: but even this in some respects, may be said to be judicial; for, though such do not sin against the gospel-light, yet they are guilty of other sins, which justly provoke God to leave them in this state of darkness and ignorance. But the punishment of sin, when God gives men up to this judgment, is more visible in those, who have had the advantages of education, above others, and have had early instructions in the doctrines of the gospel; yet, by degrees, they are turned aside from, and have denied them, and so *forsaken the guide of their youth*, Prov. ii. 17. These sometimes call those sentiments about religious matters, which once they received, implicit faith, and please themselves with their new schemes of doctrine, looking, as they call it, with pity, or, I might rather say, disdain, on others, who are not disentangled from their fetters,



or have not shook off the prejudices of education, nor arrived to so free and generous a way of thinking, as they pretend to have done. But how much soever they may glory in it, it is a sad instance of God's giving them up, in a judicial way, to the vanity and delusion of their minds; and accordingly they believe that to be a truth, which others can prove to be a lie, and which they themselves once thought so. Now this appears to be a punishment of sin, in that the gospel, which once they professed to believe, had not that effect, or tendency, as it ought, to subdue their lusts and corruptions; but they rebelled against the light, and were under the power of presumptuous sins: their understanding, and talents of reasoning, have been enlarged, and, at the same time, the pride and vanity of their minds hath not been subdued, and mortified, by the grace of God; whereupon, they have been given up first to question, then to deny, and afterwards to oppose, and, in the most profane and invidious manner, to ridicule those sacred and important truths, which they once received. This is a sad instance of the punishment of sin; and the use that I would make of it, may be in the following inferences.

(1.) That we ought not to be content with a bare speculative knowledge of divine truths, but should endeavour to improve them, to promote practical godliness, as they have a tendency to do in all those, who, as the apostle saith, *have so learned Christ*, as that they have been taught by him, as the truth is in *Jesus*, Eph. iv. 21.

(2.) We ought not to content ourselves with an implicit faith, or believe the doctrines of the gospel, merely because they have been received by wise and good men, in former or later ages, but should be able to render a reason of the faith and hope that is in us, as built upon clear scripture evidence; so, on the other hand, we must take heed that we do not despise the many testimonies which God's people have given to the truth, or forsake the footsteps of the flock, as though God had left his servants to delusions, or groundless doctrines, and there were no light in the world, or the church, till those, who have studiously endeavoured to overthrow the faith delivered to, and maintained by the saints, brought in that which they, with vain-boasting, call new light, into it.

(3.) Let us strive against the pride of our understanding, which oftentimes tempts us to disbelieve any doctrine which we cannot fully account for, by our shallow methods of reasoning, as though we were the only men that knew any thing; and, as Job says, *Wisdom must die with us*, Job xii. 2.

(4.) If we are in doubt concerning any important truth, let us apply ourselves, by faith and prayer, to Christ, the great prophet of his church, who has promised his Spirit to lead his

people into all necessary truth, to establish them in, and to keep them from being turned aside from it, by every wind of doctrine, through the management and sophistry of those who lie in wait to deceive. And to this we may add, that we ought to bless God for, and to make a right use of the labours of others, who have not only been led into the knowledge of the gospel themselves, but have taken a great deal of pains, and that with good success, to establish the faith of others therein.

(5.) If we have attained to a settled knowledge of the truth, and, more especially, if we have been blessed with a spiritual and practical discerning thereof, let us bless God for it, and endeavour to improve it to the best purposes, which will be a preservative against this sore judgment of being given up to the blindness of our minds, or strong delusions, and thereby to forsake our first faith.

3. Another punishment of sin, which more especially respects the will, is hardness of heart, and a reprobate sense, when men are given up to the perverseness and obstinacy of their natures, so that they are fixedly resolved to continue in sin, whatever be the consequence thereof, when they cannot bear reproof for, and refuse to be reclaimed from it, whatever methods are used in order thereunto. Thus the prophet speaks, concerning a people, which had had forewarnings by sore judgments, and were, at that time, under sad rebukes of providence; yet God says, concerning them, *They will not hearken unto me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted*, Ezek. iii. 7. and the apostle speaks of some, who *have their consciences seared with a hot iron*, 1 Tim. iv. 2. and others, who are described, as *sinning wilfully*, Heb. v. 26. that is, resolutely, being head-strong, and determined to persist therein; and are as the man described in Job, *Who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers*, Job xv. 25. Thus corrupt nature expresses its enmity and opposition to God; and, as sinners are suffered to go on in this way, it may well be reckoned a punishment of sin, or an instance of God's judicial hand against them for it. This hardness of heart is sometimes compared to a *stone*, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. or a *rock*, Jer. xxiii. 19. or an *adamant*, which is hardly broken with a hammer, Zech. vii. 12. or an *iron sinew*, and their *brow* is said to be as *brass*, Isa. xlviii. 4. and sometimes they are compared to a *swift dromedary, traversing her ways; or the wild ass, used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure*, Jer. ii. 23, 24. and the *bullock unaccustomed to the yoke*, Jer. xxxi. 18. or to the *deaf adder, that stoppeth her ears; that will not hearken to the voice of the charmers, charming never so wisely*, Psal. lviii. 4, 5. This stupidity of

the heart of man is so great, that it inclines him to go on in a course of rebellion against God, and, at the same time, to conclude all things to be well; whereas, this is the most dangerous symptom, and a visible instance of God's judicial hand, as a punishment of sin in this life. There are several instances, in which this hardness of heart discovers itself; as,

(1.) When men are not afraid of God's judgments threatened, nor regard the warnings given thereof before-hand, or when they refuse to humble themselves under them, as God says to Pharaoh, *How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?* Exod. x. 3.

(2.) When they stifle, and do not regard those convictions of conscience, which they sometimes have; and, though they know that what they do is sinful, and displeasing to God, yet they break through all those fences, which should have prevented their committing it, as the apostle speaks of some, *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things, are worthy of death; not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them,* Rom. i. 32.

(3.) Men may be said to be hardened in sin, when they do not mourn for, or repent of it, after they have committed it: but, on the other hand, endeavour to conceal, extenuate, and plead for it, rather than to forsake it. And here we may take occasion to enquire,

[1.] What are those sins which more especially lead to this judgment of hardness of heart. These are,

1st, A neglect of ordinances, such as the word preached, as though we counted it an indifferent matter, whether we wait at wisdom's gate, or no, or make a visible profession of subjection to Christ, and desire of communion with him herein; and particularly when we live in the constant neglect of secret prayer: thus the hardened sinner is described, when it is said, *Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God,* Job xv. 4.

2dly, Another sin leading to it, is, a person's delighting in, or associating himself with such companions, as are empty and vain, express an enmity to the power of godliness, and frequently make things sacred, the subject of their wit and ridicule, choosing such for his bosom-friends, who cannot bear to converse about divine things, but rather depreciate, or cast contempt upon them; such an one is called, *A companion of fools,* and is opposed to those that *walk with wise men, who shall be wise,* Prov. xiii. 20. and there is no method which will have a more direct tendency to harden the heart, or root out any of the remains of serious religion, than this.

3dly, A shunning faithful reproof, or concluding those our enemies, who are, in this respect, our best friends. He that cannot bear to be told of his crimes, by others, will, in a little



while, cease to be a reprover to himself, and hereby will be exposed to this judgment of hardness of heart.

4thly, Our venturing on the occasions of sin, or committing it presumptuously, without considering the heinous aggravations thereof, or the danger that will ensue to us thereby ; these things will certainly bring on us a very great degree of hardness of heart.

But, since there are some who are afraid of falling under this judgment, and are ready to complain, that the hardness, which they find in their own hearts, is of a judicial nature ; this leads us to enquire,

[2.] What is the difference between that hardness of heart, which believers often complain of, and judicial hardness, which is considered, in this answer, as a punishment of sin. There is nothing that a believer more complains of, than the hardness and impenitency of his heart, its lukewarmness and stupidity under the ordinances ; and there is nothing that he more desires, than to have this redressed, and is sometimes not without a degree of fear, lest he should be given up to judicial hardness ; and therefore, to prevent discouragements of this nature, let it be considered,

(1.) That judicial hardness is very seldom perceived, and never lamented ; a broken and a contrite heart is the least thing that such desire : But it is otherwise with believers ; for, as it is said of Hezekiah, that *he was humbled for the pride of his heart*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26. so all they, who have the truth of grace, and none but such, are exceedingly grieved for the hardness of their heart, which is an argument that it is not judicial, how much soever it be, in common with every sin, the result of the corruption of nature, and the imperfection of this present state.

(2.) Judicial hardness is perpetual ; or, if ever there be any remorse, or relenting, or the soul is distressed, by reason of its guilt, or the prevalency of sin, it is only at such times when he is under some outward afflictions, or filled with a dread of the wrath of God ; and, as this wears off, or abates, his stupidity returns as much, or more, than ever : Thus it was with Pharaoh, when he was affrighted with the mighty thundering and hail, with which he was plagued, he *sent for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned ; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked*, Exod. ix. 27. but, when the plague was removed, it is said, that *he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart*. But it is otherwise with a believer ; for sometimes, when no adverse dispensations, with respect to his outward circumstances in the world, trouble him, yet he is full of complaints, and greatly afflicted, that his heart is no more affected in holy duties, or inflamed with love to God, or zeal for his glory, or

that he cannot delight in him as he would, or obtain a complete victory over in-dwelling sin, which is his constant burden ; and, whenever he has a degree of tenderness, or brokenness of heart, under a sense of sin, it is not barely the fear that he has of the wrath of God, as a sin-revenging judge, or the dreadful consequences of sin committed, that occasion it, but a due sense of that ingratitude and disingenuity, which there is in every act of rebellion against him, who has laid them under such inexpressible obligations to obedience.

(3.) Judicial hardness is attended with a total neglect of all holy duties, more especially those that are secret ; but that hardness of heart which a believer complains of, though it occasions his going on very uncomfortably in duty, yet it rather puts him upon, than drives him from it.

(4.) When a person is judicially hardened, he makes use of indirect and unwarrantable methods to maintain that false peace, which he thinks himself happy in the enjoyment of ; that, which he betakes himself to, deserves no better character than a refuge of lies ; and the peace he rejoices in, deserves no better a name than stupidity : but a believer, when complaining of the hardness of his heart, cannot take up with any thing short of Christ, and his righteousness ; and it is his presence that gives him peace ; and he always desires that faith may accompany his repentance, that so, whenever he mourns for sin, the comfortable sense of his interest in him, may afford him a solid and lasting peace, which is vastly different from that stupidity and hardness of heart, which is a punishment of sin.

There is another expression in this answer, which denotes little more than a greater degree of judicial hardness, when it is styled, *A reprobate sense*, or, as the apostle calls it, *A reprobate mind*, Rom. i. 28. which God is said to have given them up to, *who did not like to retain him in their knowledge* ; the meaning of which is, that persons, by a course of sin, render their hearts so hard, their wills so obstinate and depraved, as well as their understandings so dark and defiled, that they hardly retain those notices of good and evil, which are enstamped on the nature of man, and, at some times, have a tendency to check for, and restrain from sin, till they are entirely lost, and extinguished by the prevalency of corrupt nature, and a continued course of presumptuous sins ; and, as the result hereof, they extenuate and excuse the greatest abominations : Thus Ephraim is represented, as saying, *In all my labours, they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin*, Hos. xii. 8. whereas God says in a following verse, that *they provoked him to anger most bitterly*, ver. 14. and, after this, they entertain favourable thoughts of the vilest actions, as some are represented doing, *Who call evil good, and*

*good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter, Isa. v. 20.*

4. The next spiritual judgment mentioned in this answer, as a punishment for sin, is a person's being given up to *vile affections*. This God is said to have done, to those whom the apostle describes, as *giving themselves over to the committing of those sins*, which are contrary to nature, Rom. i. 26. such as all men generally abhor, who do not abandon themselves to the most notorious crimes: This is a contracting that guilt, which is repugnant to those natural ideas of virtue and vice, which even an unregenerate man, who has not arrived to this degree of impiety, cannot but abhor. These are such as are not to be named among Christians, or thought of, without the utmost regret, and an afflictive sense of the degeneracy of human nature.

5. The last thing mentioned in this answer, in which the inward punishment of sin, in this life, consists, is, *Horror of conscience*. Under the foregoing instances of spiritual judgments, conscience seemed to be asleep, but now it is awakened, and that by the immediate hand of God, and this is attended with a dread of his wrath falling upon it: horror and despair are the result hereof; *The arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against him, Job vi. 4. and, Terrors take hold on him as waters; a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and, as a storm, hurleth him out of his place. For God shall cast upon him, and not spare; he would fain flee out of his hand, chap. xxvii. 20—22.*

This differs from those doubts and fears, which are common to believers, inasmuch as it is attended with despair, and a dreadful view of God, as a God *to whom vengeance belongeth*, and is attended, as the apostle says, *with a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, Heb. x. 27.* Before this, he took a great deal of pains to stifle convictions of conscience, but now he would fain do it, but cannot; which is a sad instance of the wrath of God pouring forth gall and wormwood into it, when he says, to use the prophet's words, *Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee, Jer. ii. 19.*

But, now we are speaking concerning horror of conscience, we must take heed, lest we give occasion to doubting believers, who are under great distress of soul, through a sense of sin, to apply what has been said, to themselves, for their farther discouragement, and conclude, that this is a judicial act of God, and a certain evidence, that they have not the truth of grace: Therefore we may observe, that there is a difference between this horror of conscience, which we have been describing, and



that distress of soul, which believers are often liable to, in three respects.

(1.) The former, under horror of conscience, flee from God, as from an enemy, and desire only to be delivered from his wrath, and not from sin, the occasion of it; whereas the believer desires nothing so much, as that his iniquity, which is the occasion of it, may be subdued and forgiven, and that he may have that communion with God which he is destitute of; and, in order thereunto, he constantly desires to draw nigh to him in ordinances, and, if he cannot enjoy him he mourns after him: Thus the Psalmist complaineth, as one in the utmost degree of distress, *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves*, Psal. lxxxviii. 7. yet he says, *Unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer present thee*, ver. 13.

(2.) The one reproaches God, and entertains unworthy thoughts of him, as though he were severe, cruel, and unjust to him; whereas the other, with an humble and penitent frame of spirit, complains only of himself, acknowledges that there is no unrighteousness with God, and lays all the blame to his own iniquity.

(3.) Horror of conscience, when it is judicial, seldom continues any longer, than while a person is under some outward afflictive dispensation of providence, under which sin is increased, and the removal thereof leaves him as stupid as he was before: whereas it is otherwise with a believer; for the removal of God's afflicting hand, as to outward troubles, will not afford him any remedy against his fears, unless sin be mortified, and God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon him, and give him joy and peace in believing.

*Secondly*, Having considered the *inward* punishments of sin, in this life we are now to speak something concerning those, which, in this answer, are styled *outward*, of which some are the immediate consequence of the first entrance of sin into the world, and others are increased by the frequent commission thereof; the former includes in it the curse of God upon the creature for our sakes, and our liableness to death; the latter respects those various other evils that befall us, of which some are personal, and others relative; accordingly, many evils are said to befall us, in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments.

1. The curse of God was denounced against the creatures, immediately after man's apostasy from him: This is, in part, contained in the threatening, *Cursed be the ground for thy sake. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground*, Gen. iii. 17—19. and it is very elegantly described by the apostle, who speaks of (a) *the creature as subject to vanity, not willingly,*

(a) *χθονος*, means animal nature in man. The relief of the body is spoken of.

but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same in hope; (b) and of the whole creation's groaning and travelling in pain together until now, Rom. viii. 20—22. the general scope and design whereof seems to be this, that it retains the visible marks of the curse of God, which followed upon man's sin. This I rather think to be the sense thereof, than to suppose, as some do, that the creature, here spoken of, is the Gentile world, and the vanity, which they were subject to, that idolatry which they were universally addicted to; for that does not seem to agree with what the apostle says, when he supposes that their subjection to this vanity was not *willingly*, neither can it well be called the bondage of corruption. But if, on the other hand, we take it for that part of the creation, which was more immediately designed for the use of man, being abused, and so subject to that vanity, which is the consequence of his fall, this agrees very well with its being *not willingly*; for he is speaking here of creatures not endowed with understanding and will, yet abused by those that are, and therefore their subjection to man's vanity, is not so much from themselves, as from man's sin; and then he speaks of the liableness of all these things to corruption, as the world is decaying and growing toward a dissolution. How far this curse of God, on the creature, extended itself, whether only to this lower world, or to the heavenly bodies themselves, such as the sun, moon, and stars, I pretend not to determine; for I desire not to extend my conjectures beyond the line of scripture, which speaks of *the earth, as cursed for man's sake*; and how far the other parts of nature, are liable to corruption, or inclined towards a dissolution, it is hard to say. All that I shall add, on this head, is, that, when this is called a punishment, which is consequent on man's sin, it more especially respects man, who is the only subject of punishment in this world: inanimate creatures are the matter, in which he is punished, but he alone is the subject thereof.

2. There are other evils that befall us, in which we are more immediately concerned, and these are either personal or relative; and, accordingly,

(1.) We are liable to bodily diseases, which are a continual weakness, or decay of nature; and afterwards to death, which is the dissolution of the frame thereof. All the pains and disorders of nature, whereby our health is impaired, and our passage, through this world, rendered uneasy, are the consequence of our sinful and fallen state, and, in that respect, are sometimes styled, a punishment of sin: thus, when our Saviour healed the man that was sick of the palsy, he intimates, that his sickness was the consequence of sin, by the mode of expression used, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, Mat. ix. 2. and the Psalmist speaks

(b) ver. 20. is a parenthesis, except, "in hope." "Waiteth &c. sons of God" "in hope that the creature, &c."

of God's *pardon*ing the iniquities of his people, and healing all their diseases, Psal. ciii. 3. at the same time ; in this respect, they are styled, in a more large sense, a punishment of sin : but, when they have a mixture of the wrath of God in them, and are not rendered subservient to our good, nor included among those dispensations, which are called fatherly chastisements, as they are not in those that are in an unjustified state, they are, in a more proper sense, punishments of sin. Thus the diseases that God brought on the Egyptians, are reckoned among the plagues of Egypt, and so were a visible instance of the vindictive justice of God. The same thing may be said of death, which is the dissolution of the frame of nature, which is a consequence of sin, in all, and in the most proper sense, a punishment of sin, in those, who are liable not only to the stroke, but the sting of death, and thereby are brought under the power of the second death.

(2.) There are many evils that befall us in our names, when we meet with reproaches and injurious treatment, as to what concerns our character in the world, from those who act as though their tongues were their own, and they were not accountable to God, for those slanders and revilings, which they load us with. We are, in this case, very ready to complain of the injustice done us, by their endeavouring to deprive us of that, which is equally valuable with our lives : but we ought to consider, that sin is the cause of all this, and God's suffering them thus to treat us, and thereby to hinder our usefulness in the world, must be reckoned a punishment of sin.

(3.) There are other evils that befall us in our secular concerns, namely, our estates and employments in the world, which are entirely at the disposal of providence, which renders us rich, or poor, succeeds, or blasts, our lawful undertakings. This God may do, out of his mere sovereignty, without giving an account of his matters to any one. But yet, when we meet with nothing but disappointments, or want of success in business, and whatever diligence, or industry, we use, appears to be to no purpose, and adverse providences, like a torrent, sweep away all that we have in the world, and poverty comes upon us, like an armed man, this is to be reckoned no other than a punishment of sin.

(4.) There are other evils, which we are exposed to, in our relations, by which we understand, the wickedness of those who are nearly related to us, or the steps they take to ruin themselves, and cast a blemish on the whole family to which they belong. The bonds of nature, and that affection, which is the result thereof, render this very afflictive : and especially when they, who are related to us, attempt any thing against us to our prejudice, this is a circumstance that sharpeneth the edge of the affliction. And, as it is a sin in them, which is contrary



to the dictates of nature ; so sometimes we may reckon it a punishment which we are liable to, as the consequence of our sin in general. But, if we have occasion to reflect on our former conversation, as not having filled up every relation with those respective duties, that it engages to ; if we have been undutiful to our parents, or unfaithful servants to our masters, or broke the bonds of civil society, by betraying or deserting our friends, and setting aside all those obligations which they have laid us under ; this oftentimes exposes us to afflictive evils of the like nature, whereby the affliction we meet with in others, appears to be a punishment of our own sin. Thus concerning the punishment of sin in this life ; from whence we may make the following remarks.

1. Whatever evils we are exposed to in this world, we ought to be very earnest with God, that he would not give us up to spiritual judgments. The punishments of sin, which are outward, may be alleviated and sweetened with a sense of God's love, and made subservient to our spiritual and eternal advantage. But blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and those other evils, which tend to vitiate and defile the soul, which have in them the formal nature of punishment, these are to be dreaded like hell ; and, as we are to be importunate with God to prevent them, so we ought to watch against those sins that lead to them ; and therefore let us take heed of being insensible, or stupid, under any afflictive evils, as neglecting to hear the voice of God, who speaks by them, or refusing to receive instruction by correction.

2. Let us not be too much dejected, or sink under those outward afflictive providences, which we are liable to ; for, though they be the consequence of sin, yet, if we have ground to conclude, by faith, that our sins are forgiven, they are not to be reckoned the stroke of justice, demanding satisfaction, and resolving never to remove its hand from us, till we are consumed thereby ; since believers often experience, what the prophet prays for, that God *in wrath remembers mercy*, Hab. iii. 2.

3. Let us take heed that we do not ascribe afflictive providences to chance, or content ourselves with a bare reflection on them, as the common lot of man in this world, who is *born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards* : For, this we may do, and not be humbled for that sin, which they are designed to bring to remembrance, as they are to be reckoned a punishment thereof.

4. Let us not murmur, or quarrel with God, as though he dealt hardly with us, in sending afflictive evils ; but rather let us bless him, how heavy soever they appear to be, that they are not extreme, but mitigated, and have in them a great mixture of mercy. Thus God says, concerning the evils that he had brought upon Israel, that *in measure he would debate with*

*them, who stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind; and by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, Isa. xxvii. 8, 9.* and, by this means, God not only afflicts us less than our iniquities deserve, but brings good to us thereby in the end. If the guilt of sin is taken away, we have ground to conclude, that all these things *shall work together for good*, as he has promised they shall, to those that *love him*. This leads us to consider,

II. The punishment of sin in the world to come. Though the wrath of God be revealed, in many instances, in a very terrible manner, as a punishment of sin in this life, yet there is a punishment unspeakably greater, which sinners are liable to, in the world to come. That this may appear, let us consider the following propositions.

1. That the soul exists after its separation from the body by death; which is evident, from the immateriality thereof, and its being of a different nature from the body. This was known and proved by the light of nature; so that the very heathen, who had no other light than that to guide them, discover some knowledge of it. But this is more plain from scripture; as when it is said, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell*, Matt. x. 28.

2. The soul thus existing, though separate from its body, must be supposed to retain those powers and capacities it had, while united to it, which are proper to it, as a spirit, and particularly as the subject of moral government; and those powers and capacities may also be supposed to be in it in a greater degree, when dislodged from the body, which is a great hindrance to it in its actings, as every one sensibly experiences; therefore it follows,

3. That it cannot but be happy, or miserable, in another world; for there is no middle state between these two. This is farther evident from what was observed in the last proposition, concerning the continuance and increase of its powers and faculties, whereby it is rendered more capable thereof, than it is now.

4. If it goes out of this world, under the weight and guilt of sin upon it, it must retain that guilt, because there is no sacrifice for sin, extending itself to that world; no mediator, no gospel, or means of grace; no promises of, or way to obtain forgiveness; therefore,

5. Wicked men, whose sins are not forgiven in this world, are the subjects of punishment in the other.

6. This punishment cannot be castigatory, or paternal, or consistent with the special love of God, or, for their advantage, as the punishments of the sins of believers are in this world, since it is always expressed as the stroke of vindictive justice, demanding satisfaction for sins committed.

7. Some are happy in a future state, namely, those who are justified; for, *whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. viii. 30. But this is not the privilege of all; therefore they who are not justified, or whose sins are not pardoned, are the subjects of the punishment of sin in the world to come. This is a very awful subject, and should be duly improved, to awaken our fears, and put us upon using those means, which God has ordained to escape it. But I shall not, in this place, enlarge upon it, since it is particularly insisted on under another answer,\* and therefore I shall only observe, that, as sin is objectively infinite, as being against an infinite God, it deserves eternal punishment. And therefore all the punishments inflicted on sinners, in this world are not proportioned to it; and consequently there are vials of wrath, reserved in store, to be poured on those, who wilfully and obstinately persist in their rebellion against God, and the punishment will be agreeable to the nature of the crime; so that as sin is a separation of the heart and affections from God, and contains in it a disinclination to converse with him, as well as unmeetness for it, the punishment thereof will consist in a separation from his comfortable presence, and that is to be separated from the fountain of blessedness, which must render the soul beyond expression, miserable. This is generally called a punishment of loss; and there is besides it, a punishment of sense, expressed by those grievous torments, which are to be endured in soul and body; the soul, in a moral sense, may be said to be capable of pain, as it has an afflictive sensation of those miseries which it endures; and the body is so in a natural sense, which, as it has been a partner with the soul in sinning, must likewise be so in suffering. And this farther appears inasmuch as the body endures several pains and evils, as punishments of sin in this life, which shall be continued, and increased in another. This is usually expressed by that punishment, which is most terrible, namely, of fire; and the place in which it is inflicted, is hell, and the duration thereof is to eternity. But of these things elsewhere. (a)

\* See Quest. lxxxix.

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(a) The faculties of the soul speak it made for eternity; particularly conscience points to a time of retribution. The same truth may be deduced from the holiness, justice, and even the goodness of God; from the moral agency of man; from the course of the conduct of men; and from the unequal administration of justice: but the solid and clear proofs are found in the word of God. How pitiable the condition of that man, who having spent his life without a view to a final account, has no other hope in the hour of death, except that which is founded upon the groundless supposition, that God will cease to be holy, just, and true; that he will change from his original purpose, subvert the order of his government, and surrender the demands of religion, conscience, and reason, to save the guilty in their sins.

Humanity would lead us to entertain a secret wish, that the impenitent should



QUEST. XXX. *Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?*

ANSW. God will not leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called, the covenant of works; but of his mere love and mercy, delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them to an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace.

**H**ITHERTO we have considered man as made upright, and having many blessings in possession, and more in expectation, according to the tenor of the covenant he was un-

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be permitted to drop into non-existence, and that the demands of justice should be waved; but this sentiment is unadvised, and springs from an ignorance of the demerit of sin; defective views of the importance of rectitude in the administration of the divine government; from imperfect conceptions of God's perfections; from our own interest, or from a faulty sympathy for the undeserving. Existence is a blessing; but when prostituted to the dishonour of the Creator, the party will not be at liberty to throw it up when he chooses, and thus elude the demands of justice.

The minds of the unrenewed are directed prevailingly to temporal things; a total separation from them, is, perhaps, the first sense of punishment which is felt. They have not in life sought eternal happiness, yet they generally have supposed it possible to be attained, or that mercy would bestow it. The discovery of their eternal separation from heaven, the society of the blessed, the beatific vision of God, from fulness of joys, and rivers of pleasures, will produce abject despair. This will be aggravated by the reflection that they might have been happy. The blessings of providence, the mercy of God in making provision for their recovery, the love and compassion of Christ, the means of grace, the invitations and warnings of the Gospel, all abused and lost, will augment their remorse to an inconceivable degree. The malice and horrors of their cursed society of fiends and damned spirits, will be another source of torment.

Great as these distresses may be, the separate spirits are dreading greater evils. "*Hast thou come to torment us before the time?*" When the judgment has passed, "*death*," the bodies which had been dead, "*and hell*," the spirits which had been in Hades, "*shall be cast into the lake of fire*." If their bodies shall be raised spiritual, incorruptible, and immortal, which is affirmed of the righteous; and seems probable, because the earth will be destroyed, and they will be associated with spirits, yet the sense of the pain, which arises from burning, may be given and continued in them by the application of fire, or even without it.

But that which imbitters all their distresses in the highest degree, is, that they shall be eternal. The original words of the scripture expressive of their perpetuity, being unrestrained by any implied or expressed limitation, should be understood as when applied to Deity, or the happiness of the saints. The same perpetual duration is also shown by negation, which is the strongest language. "*The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*;" it is "*unquenchable fire*," and "*their end*," (or final state,) "*is to be burned*." We read of a sin which shall "*not be forgiven*." "*Not every one—shall enter into the kingdom*;" and where Christ is, they "*cannot come*." They will "*have judgment without mercy*." None of these things are true, if all men shall be saved.

Perhaps justice required that these evils should be disclosed; but if they be unjust, it was improper to threaten them. Our aversion to them springs from our ignorance of the evil of sin. Nevertheless, the sacrifice of Christ, and the warnings of scripture, speak their extent; and the continuance of the damned in sin, establishes their certainty.

der. We have also observed the first entrance of sin into the world, with all those miseries that attended it; and we are now led to speak of that inestimable display of divine love and grace, which appears in our salvation, which is considered more generally in this answer; wherein there is,

I. Something supposed, namely, that if God had left man in the state into which he brought himself by sin, he would have perished for ever. He was not only in danger of ruin and destruction, but sunk into it. He was like a brand in the fire, that would soon have been consumed, had he not been plucked out of it. His state was not only miserable, but hopeless, inasmuch as he could not think of any expedient how he might recover himself. He was guilty, and no creature could make atonement for him; separated from the comfortable presence of God, whose terrors made him afraid, and whose hand was heavy upon him; neither could he apply himself to any one, who would interpose or appear in his behalf, whereby he might be restored to the enjoyment of those privileges, which he had forfeited and lost. What tongue can express, or heart be suitably affected with the misery of this condition! And this would have been our deplorable case for ever, had we been left of God in our fallen state. But we have, in the gospel, a door of salvation opened, or glad tidings proclaimed therein, to those who were sunk as low as hell, which is the only spring and hope of comfort, to those who are afflicted with a sense of their sin and misery. Accordingly, it is farther observed,

II. That God will not leave all mankind to perish in that state, but designed to deliver his elect out of it, and bring them into a state of salvation. That God designed not to leave mankind in this miserable condition, appears from the discovery he has made of the way of salvation which was contained in that promise, which God gave to our first parents, respecting the *seed of the woman*, who was to break the *serpent's head*; or the Saviour's being *manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil*; and all the promises contained in the gospel, are, as it were, a farther improvement on it, or a continued declaration of God's purpose relating to the salvation of his people. The work of redemption wrought out by Christ, as God incarnate, was a wonderful discovery of this great truth, that God had a design to recover and save lost sinners; and all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, by whom the redemption purchased by Christ, is applied, and that joy and peace, which they have in believing, which are, as it were, the first fruits of eternal life, these are all a convincing proof that God determined not to leave man to perish in his fallen state. And to this we may add, that even the malice and rage of Satan, and all the endeavours used by him, to defeat this design, and the

glorious victory which God enables his people to obtain over him, *who are made more than conquerors through him that loved them*; these are so many convincing proofs, that God designed not to leave man, in his ruined condition, but to make known to him the way of salvation; first, to make him meet for it, and then to bring him to the possession of it.

Salvation is an inestimable privilege, containing in it all the ingredients of blessedness, such as are adapted to the condition of miserable sinners; and it is a very comprehensive one; which will appear, if we consider what we are hereby delivered from, and what we are possessed of. There is a great variety of blessings contained in the former of these; as, we are saved from sin, namely, from the guilt thereof in justification, and from the dominion thereof in sanctification, and from that bondage we were liable to, whereby we were in perpetual dread of the wrath of God, desiring to fly from his presence, and naturally inclined to yield ourselves subjects and slaves to his greatest enemy: all these we are delivered from. And there are many positive blessings and privileges, which we are made partakers of; such as, grace and peace begun here, and perfected in glory hereafter; and these are not only such as exceed our highest desert, but tend to make us completely and eternally happy. Here we are to consider,

1. The subjects of this privilege. Salvation is not extended to all miserable creatures; for, fallen angels, who were the first that rebelled against God, were left to perish, without hope of salvation, being reserved for ever in chains under darkness. And as for fallen man, how extensive soever the proclamation of salvation in the gospel is, as it is now preached to all nations, and all who sit under the sound thereof, are commanded and encouraged to press after it; yet this privilege is applied only to those who were ordained to eternal life. The purpose of God, relating hereunto, and the application thereof, are joined together in that golden chain of salvation, *Whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. viii. 30. But this has been more particularly considered elsewhere\*.

2. Here is the only moving cause, or reason, why God bestows this great salvation, or why he has designed to bring any of the sons of men to it; and that is his mere love and mercy. Salvation, whether considered in its first rise, in God's eternal purpose, or in the execution thereof in the work of conversion and sanctification, as well as in the completing of it in glorification, is ascribed to the sovereign grace and mercy of God. *Are we Chosen in Christ to be holy, or predestinated to the adoption of children by him?* this is said to be to the praise of



*the glory of his grace*, Eph. i. 4—6. And the apostle elsewhere, when resolving this great privilege of salvation, in all the branches of it, namely, regeneration, renovation, and justification, into the same original cause and ground thereof, to wit, the kindness, love, and grace of God, excludes all those works of righteousness which we have done, from being the inducement, or moving cause leading to it, Tit. iii. 4—7. so that it was the grace of God that laid the foundation stone, and it is that that brings the work to perfection.

To make this farther appear, let it be considered, that salvation must either be of grace, or of debt; either the result of God's free favour to us, or it must proceed from some obligation, which he is laid under by us, to confer this privilege upon us. Now it is certain, that it cannot take its rise from any obligation that we can lay on him; for whatever difference there is between the best of saints and the worst of sinners, it is from God, and not from the sinner himself. We have nothing but what *we first received* from him, *of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things*, Rom. xi. 35, 36.

Moreover, this salvation must be conferred, in such a way, as redounds to the glory of him, who is the author of it, whereby all the boasting in the creature is excluded, and therefore it cannot take its rise from any thing done by us; it is *not of works, lest any man should boast*, Eph. ii. 9. And, indeed, this is contrary to the main design of the gospel, which is, that no flesh should glory in his presence. And the circumstances in which those are, who are said to be the objects of salvation, are such as argue it to be altogether of grace; for, whom did the Son of Man come to seek and to save, but them that were lost? or, to whom was the way of salvation discovered, but to those who were going astray from God, and were neither inclined to return to him, nor apply themselves to any one, who might direct them how to regain his lost favour? And, if they had, it would have been to no purpose; since no creature could make known the way of salvation, any more than apply the blessings contained therein.

Were man only to be considered as a creature, and so not properly the object of salvation, which is no other than a lost sinner; or did he expect nothing else but some effects of common goodness, or the blessings of nature, he could not expect them in a way of merit; for that is contrary to the dependance of the creature on God; therefore the blessings of Providence must be considered as the result of his free favour. And were man in a sinless state, and able to perform perfect obedience, as he was at first, his ability hereunto must be supposed to be an unmerited favour; and accordingly the obedience performed would be no other than a just debt due to God, and therefore

would afford him no plea, from any merit of condignity, for the conferring any privilege, as a reward thereof: this therefore, must be the result of the divine favour.

But, when we consider him as a sinner, he is altogether unable to do what is good; and therefore, if salvation were entirely to depend on our performing obedience, so that any failure therein would deprive us of it, we should never attain it; for this obedience would be so imperfect, that God could not, in honour, accept of it. But alas! fallen man is so far from any disposition, or inclination to perform obedience, that his heart is naturally averse to it; *The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*, Rom. viii. 7. If therefore, such an one is saved, and that in such a way, that God is pleased to love him, and manifest himself to him, it must be a wonderful instance of divine grace, which no one, who has experienced it, can think on, but with admiration, especially when considering how discriminating it is; as one of Christ's disciples said unto him, *How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?* John xiv. 22.

3. Having considered salvation, as designed for all the elect, we proceed to consider the means of their attaining it; or their being brought into a state of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the covenant of grace. As salvation is ascribed to the grace of God; so it is an instance of condescending goodness, that our faith, relating hereunto, should be confirmed by such a dispensation, as is generally styled a covenant. Thus David, speaking concerning it, says, *He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. This covenant, as to what respects the parties concerned therein, and the manner in which the grace of God is displayed in it, together with the various dispensations, or administrations thereof, is particularly considered under the five following answers. The only thing, that remains to be insisted on in this, is its being called the *Second Covenant*, as opposed to the covenant of works, which is styled the *First*. The covenant of works has been considered under a foregoing answer\*; and therefore all that I shall observe, concerning it, at present, is, that though life was promised therein, as including all those blessings, which were suited to the state of man in innocency, yet there was no promise of salvation in it, which is the restoring of forfeited blessings, or a recovery from a state of death and ruin. In this respect, the covenant of grace is opposed to it.

Again, though Adam was the head of that covenant, whose obedience, or apostacy, would convey life or death to all his pos-

terity, whom he represented, yet he stood not in the relation of a Mediator, or surety, to them, for that was inconsistent with the dispensation he was under, and is applicable to no other covenant, than that which we are considering, as thus opposed to it.

Moreover, perfect obedience was demanded, as a condition of man's attaining life, and this he was thoroughly furnished to perform; whereas, in the covenant of grace, if God should insist on our performing perfect obedience, the condition would be in its own nature impossible, and therefore we should hereby rather be excluded from, than brought into a state of salvation; and whatever obedience we are engaged to perform, as expectants of salvation, this is entirely owing to the grace of God, by which *we are what we are*, as well as attain to the blessings we hope for: Herein the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace, differ.

The next thing that we are to observe, is, that the covenant of grace is called the *Second Covenant*; and this leads us to enquire, whether we have any ground, from scripture, to conclude, that there are more covenants than these two; or, at least, whether what we call the *Second Covenant*, or the covenant of grace, may not be subdivided into two covenants; since the apostle seems to speak of two covenants made with fallen man, *viz.* one that was made with the Israelites, given from mount Sinai, which was designed to continue no longer than that dispensation they were under, lasted; and the other is, that which the church has been under, ever since the gospel dispensation was erected, which is to continue to the end of the world. These are described by their respective properties, in an allegorical way, and illustrated by a similitude, taken from two mountains, Sinai and Sion; and two persons, mentioned in scripture, Agar and Sarah: The former of these is said to *gender unto bondage*; the latter brings those, who are under it into a state of liberty, Gal. iv. 24. & *seq.* and one of these covenants is said to be better than the other, and particularly called a *new covenant*; the other is represented as *decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away*, Heb. viii. 6, 8, 13.

Moreover, the apostle seems to speak of more covenants than one, made with the Jewish church; for he says, that *to them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants*, Rom. ix. 4. &c. and elsewhere, speaking concerning the Gentiles, as *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, he adds, that *they were also strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. which seems to argue, that there were more than two covenants with man; one with innocent man; the other, the gospel-covenant, which we are under; and, besides these, there were other covenants, made with Israel, which seems to carry



in it the appearance of an objection, to what was before observed, that there was, in reality, but two covenants, and that whenever we read of any covenant in scripture, it is reducible to one of them.

This may, without much difficulty, be accounted for, consistently therewith, if we consider the sense of those scriptures above mentioned.

*First*, As to those scriptures, that seem to speak of two distinct covenants, made with fallen man, to wit, one with the Israelites, the other, that which we are under, they really intend nothing more than two different dispensations of the covenant of grace; in which sense we are to understand the apostle, when he speaks of the two covenants, the *Old* and the *New*, the *First* and the *Second*: the covenant is the same, though the dispensation of the grace of God therein, or the way of revealing it to men, differs. But this will be more particularly insisted on in those following answers, which respect the various administrations of grace, under the Old and New Testament; therefore we proceed,

*Secondly*, To enquire into the meaning of those other scriptures, before-mentioned, which seem to speak of more covenants than one, which the Jewish nation was under. By the covenants there mentioned, the apostle seems to refer to some different times, or periods of the church, before our Saviour's incarnation, of which some divines take notice of four; in each of which, there was something new and distinct from the rest, in the dispensation of divine providence towards the church. The first of these took its rise from the promise which God gave to man, as soon as he fell, relating to that salvation, which was to be brought about, in its proper time, by the seed of the woman. The second period of the church began after the flood, when God is said to have revealed his covenant to Noah, which he *established between him and all flesh upon the earth*, Gen. ix. 17. A third remarkable period, or change of affairs in the church, was, when God called Abraham out of an idolatrous country, *to sojourn in the land of promise, as in a strange country*, at which time he established his covenant with him, promising to be a *God to him, and his seed*, and instituting *circumcision as a token thereof*, Gen. xvii. 7—11. upon which occasion, this particular dispensation thereof is called, *The covenant of circumcision*, Acts vii. 8. The fourth and last dispensation, or period, which more especially respected the seed of Abraham, as increased to a great nation, is what we read of, soon after they were delivered from the Egyptian bondage, when God was pleased to separate that nation, as a peculiar people to himself, and sent Moses from mount Sinai, where he appeared to them, to demand their explicit consent

to be his people; upon which occasion, when they had promised, that all that *the Lord had said, they would do and be obedient*, and a public and solemn sacrifice was offered, and the people *sprinkled with the blood thereof*, it is said, *They saw God, and did eat and drink*, as a farther sign and ratification of this dispensation of the covenant, *Exod. xxiv. 1—11.* and afterwards many statutes and ordinances were given them, containing those laws, which God required of them, as a covenant people; and this continued till the gospel-dispensation, which succeeded it, was erected. This seems to be the meaning of what the apostle speaks, in the scriptures before cited, when he says, that the church of the Jews had the covenants, as intending nothing else thereby, but the dispensation of the covenant of grace, as subdivided into several periods, during the various ages of the church, from the fall of Adam to our recovery by Christ. Therefore, though those dispensations were various, yet whatever God has transacted with man, in a federal way, may be considered under two general heads; the first called the covenant of works; the other, the covenant of grace; the latter of which is to be farther considered, under the following answers.

**QUEST. XXXI.** *With whom was the covenant of grace made?*

**ANSW.** The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam; and in him, with all the elect, as his seed.

**A**S the covenant of grace is opposed to that which was made with Adam, as the head of mankind, so it is considered in this answer, as made with the second Adam, and, in him, with all his elect, who are described, by the Psalmist, as *a seed that should serve him, which should be accounted to the Lord for a generation*, *Psal. xxii. 30.* and the prophet Isaiah, speaking of them, says, *He shall see his seed*, *Isa. liii. 10.* In explaining this answer, we shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by a covenant in general, and more particularly how it is to be understood, as used in scripture. The word commonly used in the Old Testament,\* to signify a covenant, being taken in several senses, may be better understood, by the application thereof, in those places, where we find it, than by enquiring into the sense of the root, from whence it is derived. Sometimes, indeed, it signifies such a compact between two parties, as agrees with our common acceptation of the word, especially when applied to transactions between man and man; as in the covenant between Abraham, and those neighbouring princes, that were confede-

\* ברית.

*rate with him*, where the same word is used, in Gen. xiv. 13. and in the covenant between Isaac and Abimelech, mentioned in Gen. xxvi. 28, 29. and in that between Jonathan and David, in 1 Sam. xx. 16, 17. in all which instances there was mutual stipulation, and re-stipulation, as there is in human covenants; and, for this reason, some apply those ideas to the word, when it is used to signify God's entering into covenant with man.

But there is another acceptation thereof when God is represented as making a covenant with man which is more agreeable to the divine perfections, and that infinite distance there is between him and us; therefore we find in several places of scripture, that when God is said to make a covenant there is an intimation of some blessings which he would bestow upon his people, without any idea of stipulation, or re-stipulation, annexed to it: thus we read, in Jer. xxxiii. 20. of God's *covenant of the day and night*, or that there should be day and night in their season; and, in Gen. xi. 9, 10, 11. of God's establishing *his covenant with Noah, and his seed, and every living creature, that all flesh should not be cut off any more, by the waters of a flood*. And, in Ezek. xxxiv. 25. when God promises to cause *evil beasts to cease out of the land*, and that his people should *dwell safely in the wilderness*, and that he would confer several other blessings upon them, mentioned in the following verses; this is called, his making with them *a covenant of peace*. And, when God promises spiritual blessings to his people, in Isa. lix. 21. he says, *This is my covenant with them; my Spirit that is upon thee, and the words that I have put into thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth, and for ever*.

Moreover, sometimes the Hebrew word, which we translate *covenant*; is used to signify a *statute*, or *ordinance*, which God has established, or appointed, in his church: thus, in Numb. xviii. 19. when God ordained, that Aaron and his sons should have the heave-offerings of the holy things, he says, *These have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, to be a statute for ever*, and adds, in the words immediately following, *It is a covenant of salt for ever, before the Lord*.

And as for the word used in the New Testament,\* by which the LXX generally translate the Hebrew word, before-mentioned, in the Old Testament, this signifies the same thing; so that both the words imply little more than a divine establishment or ordinance, in which God gives his people ground to expect promised blessings, in such a way, as redounds most to his own glory; and at the same time, they, who are expect-

\* *διαθήκη*.



tants thereof, are not exempted from an obligation to perform those duties, which this grace obliges them to, and which will be an evidence of their right to them.

And I cannot but farther observe, that among other acceptations of the word, especially as used by the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, in chap. ix. 15—18. it signifies a Testament; which word some who treat on this subject, rather choose to make use of, than to call it a covenant, being warranted so to do, by the sense given of it in this scripture; and their reason for it is, not only because, as the apostle says, it was *confirmed by the death of the Testator*; but because they conclude, that this more conduces to the advancing the grace of God, in this dispensation, than to style it a *covenant*, in that sense, in which the word is commonly used, when applied to other matters: but I would rather acquiesce in that medium, betwixt both extremes, which some have given into, who join both the ideas of a covenant and a testament together\*, and style it, in some respects, a covenant, and, in others a testament. If it be called a covenant, they abstract from the ideas thereof, some things, that are contained in the sense of the word, as applied to human contracts, and add to it other things, contained in a testament; such as the giving or bequeathing certain legacies, as an act of favour, to those who are denominated, from thence, legatees, interested in those gifts that are thus disposed of by the will of the testator. Or if, on the other hand, we call it a testament it seems very agreeable, to this dispensation, to join with it the idea of a covenant, more especially as to what contains the concern of Christ herein, as the Head thereof, or the Person in whom all the benefits, contained in this testament, are first reposed, as they are purchased by his blood, and, as the consequence thereof, applied by his Spirit. And this agrees very well with the subject-matter of this answer, in which the covenant is said to be made with him, and with the elect in him, as well as with what is contained in that answer immediately following, in which the covenant of grace is described in such a way, as they describe it, who say that it was made with believers. This is necessary to be premised, that we may not, in our explication of this doctrine, advance any thing which is inconsistent with its being a covenant of grace: and, that we may farther consider this matter, we shall proceed to shew,

II. What there is in the idea of a covenant, as we generally understand the word, when applied to signify a contract be-

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\* These style it, *Testamento Foedus*, or *Foedus Testamentarium*, or *Testamentum Foederale*.

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(a) Rather, "ratified over a dead body," an ancient mode of covenanting

tween man and man. In this case, there are two parties, one of which is said to stipulate, or enter into a covenant with the other, in which he makes a proposal, that he will confer some favours on him, upon certain conditions, provided he will oblige himself to fulfil them; and the other party complies with the proposal made, and, in expectation of those advantages, consents to fulfil the conditions enjoined, and accordingly is said to re-stipulate; as when a person engages another to be his servant, and to give him a reward for his service; and the other consents to serve him, in expectation of the wages which he engages to give him: in this case, each party is supposed to be possessed of something, which the other has no right to, but by virtue of this contract made between them: thus the servant has no right to the rewards, which his master promises, nor has the master any right to his service, but by mutual consent. Each party also proposes some advantage to himself, and therefore, when they enter into this agreement, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand on a level with each other. No one will enter into a covenant with another, for the performing that which he had an antecedent right to; nor will any one engage to perform any service, as a condition of his receiving those benefits, which he had a right to, without any such condition enjoined on him. Moreover, when two parties are said to enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed, in some respects, to stand in need of some things, which they had before no right to; one party needs the reward proposed; the other, the service which he enjoins, as a condition of his bestowing it. These things are generally supposed, and contained in contracts between man and man.

III. When God is said to enter into covenant with man, what method soever we take to explain this federal transaction, we must take heed that we do not include in it any thing that is inconsistent with his infinite sovereignty, or argues him to be dependent on his creatures, as though he had not an antecedent right to their obedience, which he demands in this covenant, or it were left to man's arbitrary will whether he would perform it or no. Though men may be said to have some things in their own power, so that one has a right to that, which another has no right to, but by his own consent, and are entirely left to their liberty, whither they will consign over that right, which they had to it, to another, who could not otherwise lay claim to it; yet this is by no means to be applied to man when considered as having to do with the great God. The best of creatures have no right to any thing, separate from his arbitrary will; and therefore though stipulation and re-stipulation are proper words, when applied to a man's covenant, they ought not to be made use of, when we explain this covenant between God and man.

IV. Though the parties concerned in the covenant, as explained in this answer, to wit, God the Father, and Christ the Head of his elect, are both divine Persons, so that one of them is not infinitely below the other, as man is below God; and therefore it is more properly called a covenant, in this respect, than that which God is said to enter into with man, (and, if stipulation and re-stipulation is, in any respect, applicable to the divine dispensation, it may be applied in this case :) nevertheless, there are some things, which are implied in the idea of a covenant between man and man, that cannot, consistently with the glory of these divine Persons, be contained in this federal transaction between them; particularly, as he that enters into covenant with another, proposes some advantage to himself hereby: thus a master, when he stipulates with one to be his servant, is supposed as much to need his service, as the servant does the wages that he promises to give him; there is a kind of mutual advantage arising from thence: but, in the covenant of grace, whether God be said to make it with man, or with Christ, as the Head of his elect, the advantage that arises from thence is our's, and not God's. In this respect, what was done by Christ, made no addition to the essential glory of God, or the divine blessedness, any more than man can be said, in that respect, to be profitable to him: thus some understand those words of the Psalmist, as spoken by our Saviour, when he says, *My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints which are in the earth*, Psal. xvi. 2, 3. and this agrees very well with some other things, contained in the same Psalm, which are expressly, in other parts of scripture, applied to him; and, if so, then the meaning is, that whatever glory God the Father designed to demonstrate by this federal transaction with his Son; yet he did not, as men do, by entering into covenant with one another, propose to receive any addition of glory from it, as though he were really to be profited thereby.

Again, when men enter into covenant with one another, they are supposed to have different wills, and accordingly they might refuse to enter into those engagements, which they bring themselves under, as well as comply with them; the obligation, on both sides, is founded in mutual consent, and that is supposed to be arbitrary: but, when we consider the eternal compact between the Father and the Son, we must conclude, that though they be distinct as to their personality, yet, having the same essential perfections, the will of the Father and the Son, cannot but be the same. Therefore when many, who explain this doctrine, represent one as proposing, the other as complying, with the proposal; one demanding, the other expecting, and each depending on mutual promises, made by one to the other, this, it is true, seems to be founded on some



scripture-expressions to the same purpose, wherein the Holy Ghost is pleased to condescend to make use of such modes of speaking, which are agreeable to the nature of human covenants, as he does in various other instances; nevertheless, we must not so far strain the sense of words, as to infer, from hence, any thing that is inconsistent with the divine glory of the Father and the Son. And to this we may add, that no act of obedience can be performed by a divine Person, in the same nature, as there cannot be an act of subjection in that nature, which is properly divine; and consequently when we consider Christ, in this respect, as entering into covenant, and engaging to perform those conditions, which were insisted on therein, these are supposed to be performed by him, as Mediator, or God incarnate, in his human nature; and, in this respect, he is the Head of the covenant, which is made with him, and, in him, with the elect. Therefore we must suppose, when we speak of a covenant between the Father and the Son, that, whatever be the will of the Father, the same is the Son's will; and whatever conditions the Son consented to perform, as stipulated in this covenant, it was in his human nature that the work was to be done; and therefore it is well observed, in some following answers, that he, who is the Head or Mediator of this covenant, is, as it was absolutely necessary for him to be, both God and man, in one Person. But of this more hereafter.

V. There are several expressions used, in scripture, that give us sufficient ground to conclude, that there was an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, relating to the salvation of his elect, which, if explained agreeably to the divine perfections, and consistently with the glory of each of these divine Persons, is not only an undoubted truth, but a very important article of faith, as it is the foundation of all those blessings, which are promised, and applied to us in the covenant of grace, in which is all our salvation and our hope. Here let it be considered, that, when we speak concerning a covenant, as passing between the Father and the Son, we understand thereby, that there was a mutual consent between them both, that the work of our redemption should be brought about in such a way, as it was, by our Saviour, when this eternal agreement had its accomplishment; and accordingly the Father is said to *have set him up*, as the Head of his elect, *from everlasting*, Prov. viii. 23. and ordained, that he should execute those offices, which he was to perform, as Mediator, and receive that revenue of glory, that was the result thereof; and the Son, as having the same divine will, could not but consent to do this; and this is called, his eternal undertaking; and, both these to-

gether, are styled the eternal covenant, between the Father and him.

For the proof of this doctrine, we might refer to those several scriptures that speak of our Saviour as *called*, and *given for a covenant of the people*, Isa. xlii. 6. and *fore-ordained*, 1 Pet. i. 20: to perform the work which he engaged in, in the behalf of his elect; and also consider him as consenting to do every thing for his people, which he did in time, and to stand in every relation to them, that was subservient to their redemption and salvation, which he could not but do, as having the same divine will with the Father; and without his consent, it could not properly be said that there was a covenant between them. We might also prove it from those several scriptures, that speak of him, as *sanctified and sent into the world*, John x. 36. to act as Mediator, *sealed by the Father*, John vi. 27. and receiving a *power to lay down his life, and take it up again*, John x. 18. that so he might answer the great end of our redemption thereby; and also, from his being empowered to execute the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King; confirmed in his priestly office by *the oath*, Psal. cx. 4. Heb. vii. 21. of the Father, sent by him to execute his Prophetical office to those whom he was to guide in the way of salvation; and, as *God's King, set on his holy hill of Zion*, Psal. ii. 6. When we consider all these things done, on the Father's part, as antecedent to Christ's acting as Mediator, and, at the same time, when we compare them with other scriptures, that speak of the Son, as consenting to do the will of God, or complying with his call, willing to be and do whatever was necessary, to secure the great ends designed thereby; when we consider him, as taking the human nature into union with the divine, not without his own consent thereunto, and as bearing the punishment due to our sin, which it would not have been just for God to have inflicted, without his will or consent; I say, this mutual consent between the Father and the Son, that those things should be done which were subservient to the redemption and salvation of the elect, which the scripture is very express in giving an account of, these are a sufficient foundation for our asserting, that there was a covenant between the Father and the Son relating thereunto.

But now we shall enquire, more particularly, into the sense of those scriptures, on which this doctrine is founded. And here we cannot wholly pass over what we read, in Psal. cxix. 122. *Be surety for thy servant for good*; and Hezekiah's prayer, in Isa. xxxviii. 14. *I am oppressed; undertake, or be surety, for me*. The Hebrew words are the same in both places, and signifies, not barely to confer some privileges on persons, but to do this under the character of a surety; and therefore when

David and Hezekiah pray that they may be delivered, either from their enemies, or their afflictions, by addressing themselves to their Deliverer under this character, it must be supposed that they understand him, as having undertaken to be a Surety for his people, which is a character that belongs only to the Son. And since it is so evident, that his Mediatorial work and character was so well known to the Old Testament church, as their salvation was equally concerned herein with ours; and, since they are often represented as addressing themselves to him by faith and prayer, it seems more than probable that he is so considered in these texts, when it is desired that he would be *surety for them*, namely, that as he was appointed by the Father, and had undertaken, by his own consent, to stand in that relation, they pray that they might be made partakers of the benefits arising from thence.

There is also another scripture, in which the same word \* is used, which seems to be applied to our Saviour, viz. in Jer. xxx. 21. *Their nobles*, or, as it ought to be rendered, in the singular number, *their noble*, or magnificent person, *shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them; and I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me; for who is this that engaged his heart to approach to me, saith the Lord?* This sense of the text is very agreeable to several other prophecies, relating to the Messiah's being of the seed of Israel; and when it is said, *I will cause him to draw near, and he shall approach unto me*, it implies, that he should sustain the character, and perform the work of a surety, in the behalf of his people, for that is the proper sense of the word there used; *for who is this that hath engaged his heart unto me?* that is, who is there, among the sons of men, that dares engage in this work, or is qualified for it? Or it may be understood with a note of admiration; that is, how glorious a person is this, who hath engaged his heart, or (as it was determined that he should) has freely consented to approach unto me, that is, in so doing, to act as a surety with me for my people! And that this is a more probable sense of the text, than to suppose that it is meant either of Zerubbabel, or some other governor, that should be set over them, after the captivity, appears, if we compare it with ver. 9. in which it is said, *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king*, which can be meant of none but Christ, inasmuch as David was dead; and none that sat on his throne, or descended from him, can

\* The Hebrew word in this, and the two other scriptures above mentioned, is עֲרֵב which signifies, *In fidem suam recipere; spondere pro aliquo; and it is used in several other scriptures, in the same sense, for a person's undertaking to be a surety for another. See Gen. xliii. 6. chap. xlv. 32. Prov. xi. 15. Job xvii. 3. 2 Kings xviii. 32. and elsewhere.*



be called David in this place, because divine worship is said to be performed to him, which could not be done without idolatry, which no true sense of scripture can give countenance to; and this is a character given of our Saviour in other scriptures: thus, in Ezek. xxxiv. 24. *I will be their God, and my servant David a Prince among them*; and, in Hos. iii. 5. *They shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter day*; that is, they shall adhere, and give divine worship, to the Messiah, whom their fathers rejected, when they are converted, in the latter days. Now it is this *David, their King*, who is said to have *engaged his heart to approach unto God*; and then, in the words immediately following, ver. 22. God reveals himself, as a covenant-God, to them, which is the consequence of Christ's engaging his heart to approach unto him: *Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God*. Now this proves an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, in that the Father wills, or determines, that he shall *draw near, or approach* to him, as a surety, and the Son consents, in that he has *engaged his heart* to do it; and all this with a design that his covenant should be established, and that he should be a God to his people.

There is another scripture which proves that there was a federal transaction between the Father and the Son, from several expressions therein used, namely, in Isa. xlii. 1, 6. which is, beyond dispute, spoken concerning our Saviour; for it is applied to him in the New Testament, Matt. xi. 18—21. Herein God the Father calls him *his Servant*, as denoting that it was his will, or (to use that mode of speaking, which is generally applied to covenants between man and man) that he stipulated with him, to perform the work which he engaged in, as Mediator, to which he is said to be *called in righteousness*; and, with respect to his human nature, in which he performed it, he is styled *God's elect*, as fore-ordained hereunto, and the person *in whom his soul delighteth*, as he is glorified by him in the faithful discharge thereof; and, that he might not fail therein, God promises *to hold his hand, and keep him*; and, as the result of his having accomplished it, *to give him for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles*.

And elsewhere, in Isa. xlix. 8, 9. which also appears to be spoken to Christ, not only from the context, but from the reference to it in the New Testament, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves*, we have a plain intimation of his being ordained by the Father to per-

form that work, which he was engaged in, as Mediator; and his *being given for a covenant of the people*, signifies his being sent into the world, in pursuance of a covenant, in which the salvation of his people was contained. And there is another scripture, in which our Saviour, speaking to his disciples, says, in Luke xxii. 29. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me*;\* or, I confer the blessings of this kingdom upon you, in a covenant way, as my Father hath appointed me to do, in that eternal covenant, which passed between him and me.

Again, there are several rewards, which were promised to him, as the consequence of his discharging the work committed to him, some of which respected that glory which belongs to his person, as Mediator; and others, more especially, respected the salvation of his people, and therein the success of his undertaking: thus it is said, in Isa. liii. 10. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed; he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands*; together with several other things relating to the event, and consequence of his performing the work he was engaged in.

Moreover, as he was called to this work, or, as it was, as we before explained it, the result of the Father's will, that he should perform it; so we have elsewhere an account of his own consent, as implying, that it was the result of his own will, as well as his Father's: thus it is said, in Psal. xl. 6—8. *Mine ears hast thou opened*, or bored; alluding to a custom used under the ceremonial law, by which the willing servant was signified to be obliged, by his own consent, to *serve his master for ever*, Exod. xxi. 5, 6. Thus God the Father, engaged Christ, if I may so express it, to perform the work of a Mediator; and then we have an account of his consent hereunto, when he says, *Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart*; and this mutual consent is farther expressed in Isa. l. 5. *The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious; neither turned away back*.

And he is farther represented, as making a demand, or insisting on the accomplishment of what was stipulated in this covenant; and this he had a warrant to do from the Father, in Psal. ii. 8. *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*. These, and many other scriptures of the like nature, sufficiently prove this doctrine, that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, relating to the redemption and salvation of the elect; and this implies more than his being barely *fore-ordained* to perform the work he was engaged in, as he is said to have been, 1 Pet. i. 2. for that, alone, would

\* Διατίθεμαι υμιν, παρὸς δέδοτο μοι ὁ πατήρ με βασιλεῖαν.

not have proved that there was a federal transaction between the Father and him; since it may be said of any one, who is engaged in works of an inferior nature, that God, who called him to perform them, fore-ordained that he should do so; but when it is said, concerning our Saviour not only that he engaged in the work of our redemption, as the result of his Father's will, but of his own, and so consented to do whatever was incumbent on him, as Mediator, this certainly argues that there was an eternal covenant between the Father and him, with relation to this matter, so far as we may be allowed to retain any of those ideas taken from human covenants, when we speak of any transaction between two divine Persons.

There is but one scripture more that I shall mention, which, though some will not allow that it relates to this matter, yet, if we duly consider the scope and design thereof, together with its connexion with the foregoing words, may probably appear to be of some weight to confirm this doctrine; namely, in *Zech. vi. 13.* in which it is said, *The counsel of peace shall be between them both.* Some, indeed, understand these words, as referring to Joshua and Zerubbabel, and that they signify their mutual consent, to promote the peace and welfare of the church. But this cannot reasonably be concluded to be the sense of the text; for Zerubbabel is not mentioned in this chapter; nor are there any two persons spoken of therein, that it can be applied to, but Jehovah and the Branch, that is, the Father and the Son, who are mentioned in the foregoing words; Christ, who is called the Branch, is said to *build the temple of the Lord*, and to be a *Priest upon his throne*; and this work, which he was engaged in, and the royal dignity, which he was advanced to, are both of them said to be the result of a counsel, or federal transaction, that was between them both.

If it be objected to this, that this *counsel of peace* only respects the harmony that there is between Christ's priestly and kingly offices, as both of them have a reference to our salvation: this cannot well agree with the meaning of the word *counsel*, which implies in it a confederacy between two persons, and not the tendency of two offices, executed to bring about the same end.

And, if it be farther objected, that the grammatical construction of the words do not favour the sense which we give of them, inasmuch as they contain an account of something that was future, and not from all eternity. To this it may be replied, that it is not, in the least, disagreeable to the sense of the words, and other phrases of the like import, used in scripture, to understand them in the sense before-mentioned, since it is no uncommon thing, in scripture, for that to be said to be, that appears to be: thus it is said, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom we have*



*crucified, both Lord and Christ*, Acts ii. 36. that is, he hath, by his raising him from the dead, demonstrated him to be *both Lord and Christ*, which, in reality, he was from all eternity; so, in this text, when it is said, that *the counsel of peace shall be between them both*, it signifies, that Christ's building the temple, and bearing the glory, and sitting as a Priest upon his throne, is a plain evidence, or demonstration, that there was a counsel or covenant, between the Father and him, from all eternity, relating to the peace and welfare of his people, who are the spiritual house that he builds, and the subjects whom he governs, defends, and saves. Thus concerning the federal transaction that was between the Father and the Son; and, since this is called, in this answer, *The covenant of grace*, it may be necessary for us to enquire,

VI. Whether this be a distinct covenant from that which God is said to enter into, or make with man. This covenant is said, indeed, to be made with Christ, as the head of his elect: but it may be enquired, whether there be not also another covenant, which is generally styled the covenant of grace, that is made with the elect, as parties concerned therein. Every one, that is conversant in the writings of those who treat on this subject, will observe, that divines often distinguish between the covenant of redemption, and that of grace; the former they suppose to be made with Christ, in the behalf of his elect; the latter, to be made with them, in which all spiritual blessings are promised, and applied to them, which are founded on Christ's mediation; and accordingly they say, the *covenant of redemption* was made with Christ more immediately for himself; whereas the *covenant of grace* is made with believers for Christ's sake, in which respect they suppose that these are two distinct covenants, and explain themselves thus.

1. In the covenant of redemption, made with Christ, there were several promises given, which more immediately respected himself; and these related, some of them, to those supports and encouragements that he should receive from the Father, which were necessary, in order to his being carried through the sufferings he was to undergo, *viz.* that God *would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged*, Isa. xxiv. 4. and others respected that Mediatorial glory, which should be conferred upon him, when his sufferings were finished; as it is said, *Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. and that *he should have a name given him above every name*, Phil. ii. 9. and many other promises to the like purpose.

And, besides these, there were other promises made to him, respecting his elect; as that *he should have a seed to serve him*, Psal. xxii. 30. and that *he should see of the travail of his soul*,

*and be satisfied; and that God would divide him a portion with the great, and he should divide the spoil with the strong, Isa. liii. 11, 12.* or that his difficult undertaking should be attended with its desired success, that so it might not be said that he died in vain.

But, on the other hand, in the covenant of grace, which they suppose to be distinct from that of redemption, God promiseth forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, through Christ; or that that should be restored to us by him, which we lost by our fall in Adam, with great advantage; and that all the blessings, which we stand in need of, for the beginning, carrying on, and completing the work of grace in us, and the making us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, should be freely given us. Now, as these promises are made to the elect, the covenant, in which they are contained, is called, *The covenant of grace*, and so distinguished from the covenant of redemption.

2. In the covenant of redemption, as they farther explain it, the elect, on whose account it was made, were considered, as to be redeemed by Christ: But, in the covenant of grace, they are to be considered as redeemed by him; therefore the covenant of redemption is antecedent, or subservient, to the covenant of grace.

3. They farther suppose, that the conditions of the covenant of redemption, on which the promises made therein were founded, are what Christ did and suffered in his own Person; whereas faith, wrought in us, is generally styled by them, a condition of the covenant of grace, and as such it is variously explained, as we shall have occasion to observe, under the next answer, in which faith is said to be required, as the condition to interest believers therein; in this respect, among others, the covenant of redemption is oftentimes explained, as a distinct covenant from that of grace.

I confess, I am not desirous to offend against the generation of those who have insisted on this subject, in such a way, as that they have not advanced any doctrine derogatory to the divine perfections, or subversive of the grace of God, displayed in this covenant; and therefore I am inclined to think, as some have done, that this controversy may be compromised; or, if we duly weigh those distinctions that are necessary to be considered, it will appear to be little more than what consists in different modes of explication, used by those, who, in the main, intend the same thing. I shall therefore humbly offer my thoughts, about this matter, in the four following heads.

(1.) It is to be allowed, on all hands, that the covenant of redemption, as some style it, is a covenant of the highest grace, so far as it respects the advantages that the elect are to receive

from it; for it is a wonderful instance of grace, that there should be an eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, relating to their salvation, and that herein he should promise to Christ, that, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings, he would give grace and glory to them, as it is allowed by all, who have just notions, either of the covenant of redemption, or that of grace, that he did herein.

(2.) It must be farther allowed, on both sides, whether it be supposed that the covenant of grace, and the covenant of redemption, are distinct covenants, or not, that salvation, and all the blessings, which we generally call privileges of the covenant of grace, have their first foundation in this transaction, between the Father and the Son; so that if there had not been such a covenant, which some call a covenant of redemption, we could have had no promise of these privileges made in the covenant of grace.

(3.) As there is nothing promised, or given, in the covenant of grace, but what is purchased and applied by Christ, so there is nothing promised to Christ, in the covenant of redemption, as some style it, but what, some way or other, respects the advantage of his people: thus whatever was stipulated between the Father and the Son, in that covenant, was with a peculiar regard to their salvation. Did Christ, as their surety, promise to pay that debt, which was due from them, to the justice of God? this must be considered, as redounding to their advantage. And, was there a promise given him, as was before observed, that God *would hold his hand, that he should not fail, or be discouraged*, till he had finished the work that he came about? this must also be supposed to redound to our advantage as hereby our salvation is secured, which it could not have been, had he sunk under the weight of that wrath, which he bore. And, was there a promise given him, that he should, after his sufferings, *enter into his glory*? this also redounds to the advantage of the elect; for it not only consists in his being freed from his sufferings, and having some personal glories put upon him, but in his going thither to prepare a place for them, and with this design, that they should be brought there *to behold his glory*; and this is also considered, as a pledge and earnest of their future happiness, to whom he says, *Because I live, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19.

(4.) When we consider this covenant, as made with Christ, whether we call it the covenant of redemption, or of grace, still we must look upon it as made with him, as the Head and Representative of his elect, and consequently it was made with them, as is observed in this answer, as his seed; therefore if the question be only this, whether it be more or less proper to call this two covenants, or one, I will not contend with them, who



in compliance with the common mode of speaking, assert, that they are two distinct covenants : but yet I would rather choose to call them two great branches of the same covenant; one whereof respects what Christ was to do and suffer, and the glory that he was to be afterwards possessed of; the other more immediately respects that salvation, which was to be treasured up in and applied by him to the elect; and therefore I cannot but think, that what is contained in this answer, that the covenant of grace was made with Christ, as the Head, and, in him, with the elect, as his seed, is a very unexceptionable explication of this doctrine.

VII. Since we frequently read, in scripture, of God's entering into covenant with man, and man with him, this is next to be explained, in such a way, as is consistent with the divine perfections, and, in order hereto, we have, in our entrance on this subject, enquired \* into the grammatical sense of the word *covenant*, and the common acceptation thereof in scripture, when applied to any transaction between God and man, and have shewn, that, however, there may be stipulation and re-stipulation, and thereby a passing over of mutual rights, from one party concerned to the other, in covenants between man and man; yet that this cannot, consistently with the glory of God, and that infinite distance which there is between him and the creature, be applied to the covenant of grace, and have produced some scriptures to prove, that the main thing to be considered therein, is God's promising the blessings that accompany salvation to his people.

Other scriptures might have been referred to, to the same purpose, in which, when God is said to make a covenant with his people, we read of nothing but promises of temporal, or spiritual privileges, which he would confer on them : thus, when he made a covenant with Abraham, he says, *Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates*, Gen. xv. 18. and elsewhere he says, *This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, I will put my law in their inward parts, (a) and write it in*

\* See Page 168. ante.

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(a) We are not to suppose that *they shall not teach every man*, &c. is designed to exclude all public and private, ministerial, family, and social instruction : for this is founded on the law of nature, and is enforced in the New Testament institution of a gospel-ministry to continue to the consummation of all things, (*Matth. xxviii. 20.* and *Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.*) and in the obligation that it has laid upon Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; (*Eph. vi. 4.*) as also in the directions that are given in this very epistle, chap. iii. 13. and x. 24, 25. to private Christians, to exhort one another daily, &c. This passage therefore must be taken, either in a comparative sense, as such expressions often are: (See *Isa. xliii. 18.* *Jer. xxiii. 18.* and *Mat. ix. 13.*) Or else

*their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. They shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,* Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. We might also consider the description hereof, as it is called, *A covenant of promise*, Eph. ii. 12. and they, who are interested herein, as called, *The children of promise*, Gal. iv. 28. Nevertheless, God has ordained, that, pursuant to this method of applying the promises of this covenant, none should have ground to expect to be made partakers thereof, but in such a way, as tends to set forth his infinite sovereignty, and unalienable right to obedience from his creatures, which they are bound to perform, not only as subjects, under a natural obligation to obey the divine law, but as those who are laid under a super-added engagement thereunto, by the grace of the covenant. This will prepare the way for what may be farther said, in order to our understanding the meaning of those scriptures, that speak of God's entering into a covenant with man, and man with him. Therefore let it be observed,

1. That when God entered into a covenant with Christ, as the Head of his elect, this included his entering into covenant with them; as it is expressed in this answer; so that they have their respective concern therein in all things, excepting what relates to his character, as Mediator, Redeemer, Surety, and those peculiar branches of this covenant, which, as was before observed, belong only to himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, as distinct from the covenant of grace. From hence it may be observed, without any strain on the sense of words, that the same covenant that was made with him, was in that peculiar branch thereof that respected the elect, or the privileges that they were to receive from him, made with them. This is very agreeable to, and tends to explain that peculiar mode of speaking, often used by the apostle Paul, concerning believers being *crucified with Christ*, Gal. ii. 20. *dead*, Rom. vi. 8. *buried*, ver. 4. *quicken*ed or *risen*, Col. ii. 12. compared with chap. iii. 1. and made to *sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*, Eph. ii. 6. as denoting their being made partakers, as his members, of the benefits arising from Christ's sufferings and glory, as really as though they had suffered, and were now actually glorified with him.

2. Since the covenant of grace is sometimes called a covenant of promise, for the reasons before-mentioned, we may easily understand hereby, that God's entering into covenant with

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with reference to *that manner* of teaching which was used, and rested in under the obscurities of the Old Testament dispensation, and the corrupt interpretations of the *Jewish* doctors; or both may be included.

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his people, signifies his giving, or making known to them, those great and precious promises, that are contained therein, which have a more immediate reference to their salvation ; and, on the other hand, his keeping covenant with them, implies, his bestowing on them the blessings promised in it, which is otherwise called his *remembering his holy covenant*, Luke i. 72. or his *performing the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which he had sworn unto them from the days of old*, Micah. vii. 20. and it is sometimes called his *shewing them his covenant*, Psal. xxv. 14. not barely in a way of revelation, but special application of the blessings contained therein, and his *bringing them into the bond of the covenant*, Ezek. xx. 37. that is, engaging or obliging them to obedience, from the constraints of his love and grace, manifested in the promises of this covenant ; so that now they are doubly bound to be his, not only as he is their Creator and Sovereign, but as he has made them, by this federal transaction, the peculiar objects of his favour and grace.

3. When God is pleased, as he often does, to annex to this covenant a demand of faith, repentance, or any other graces, to be exercised by those, who may claim an interest in the blessings thereof, this is agreeable to that idea, which, as was before observed, is contained in this covenant, by which it is denominated an establishment, or divine appointment, or, as it is sometimes called, *a statute*, Numb. xviii. 19. Psal. l. 16. and this respects the connexion of those graces with salvation, and their indispensable obligation thereto, who hope to attain it. But this is rather a consequence of God's entering into covenant with them, than an antecedent condition, stipulated by him, which would infer a kind of suspense in him, whether he should fulfil his promise or no, till the conditions were performed. This is the principal thing we militate against, when we except against the use of the word *stipulation*, with relation hereunto ; whereas, if nothing else were intended by this word, but the necessary connexion, which God has ordained, that there should be between the blessings promised, and the grace demanded in this covenant, as some, who use the word, understand nothing else by it ; I would not contend about persons using, or laying aside an improper, and, I think, I may say, unscriptural mode of speaking.

Thus concerning the meaning of God's entering into covenant with man. We shall now proceed to the latter branch of this head, namely, what we are to understand by those scriptures that speak of man's entering into covenant with God : such a mode of speaking we have, when Moses says to the people, *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day,*



Deut. xxix. 10—12. and it is said elsewhere, *The people entered into a covenant to seek the Lord God of their fathers, with all their hearts, and with all their soul*, 2 Chron. xv. 12. and that, *Josiah made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes with all their heart, and with all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant, that were written in this book, and all the people stood to the covenant*, 2 Kings xxiii. 3. This is a most solemn transaction, and includes in it the very essentials of practical religion ; therefore it is necessary for us to enquire, what we are to understand thereby ; and, since scripture is the best interpreter of itself, and parallel texts give light to each other, we may observe what is said elsewhere, upon the like occasion, where God speaks of some that *chuse the things that please him, love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, and take hold of his covenant*, Isa. lvi. 4, 6. so that to enter into covenant, is to take hold of God's covenant ; to embrace the blessings promised therein, as the apostle speaks of those *who died in faith, not having received the promises*, or the blessings promised, but *having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them*, Heb. xi. 13. Again, as we receive the blessings of the covenant by faith, so to enter into covenant with God implies, a professed dedication of ourselves to a covenant-God, with a due sense of our obligation to yield that obedience, which we are engaged to thereby, or a declaration that we pretend not to lay claim to the blessings of the covenant, without being enabled, by his grace to comply with the demands thereof ; and this is sometimes expressed, by swearing to the Lord, as it is said, *Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear*, Isa. xlv. 23. As God, when he enters into a covenant with man, is sometimes said to swear to him, or to confirm his promise by his oath, upon which account the covenant of grace is sometimes called his oath, as in one of the scriptures before-mentioned, and others that might have been referred to, Luke i. 72, 73. so, on the other hand, our entering into covenant with him, is our swearing fealty, as subjects do to their princes, whereby they own them to be their rightful governors, and themselves under an obligation to serve them.

This is farther explained, in that solemn transaction that passed between God and his people, in the close of the ministry and life of Moses, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. by which we may understand what is meant, in other places, by God's entering into covenant with them ; this is expressed by his *avouching them to be his peculiar people, as he had promised them, and that they should keep all his commandments* ; *q. d.* he conferred this privilege upon them with that view, that they might reckon themselves under the highest obligation to be obedient to him ; and then

we have an explication of man's entering into covenant with God, when it is said, *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God*, that is, thou hast publicly declared, that thou art willing to be subject to him, as thy covenant-God, and expressed a ready inclination, pursuant hereunto, to walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: this is such an entering into covenant, as is incumbent on all who expect the blessing thereof; and, if any one intends nothing more than this by stipulation, when he uses the word in explaining this doctrine, I will not contend with him; but, since it is to use a word without its proper ideas, which others annex to it, I humbly conceive this doctrine may be better explained without it.

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QUEST. XXXII. *How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?*

ANSW. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant in that he freely provideth, and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces, and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed to salvation.

SINCE the covenant, which we have begun to consider, is called the covenant of grace, it is necessary for us to shew in what respects the grace of God is manifested therein; and, in order thereunto, we may observe,

I. That life and salvation, which are very comprehensive blessings, containing all that sinful creatures stand in need of, are promised herein. Hereby the grace of God is more eminently illustrated than it was in the first covenant; in which though life was promised, yet there was no promise of salvation, or of the recovery of a forfeited life. This is only brought to light by the gospel, which contains a glorious discovery of the grace of this covenant: the blessings promised therein, are, grace here, and glory hereafter; all which are contained in that promise, *I will be a God to thee*, that is, I will deal with thee in such a way, as that all my divine perfections shall contribute to thy happiness. And sometimes when God reveals himself as a covenant-God, he promises, as he did to Abraham, that *he will be their shield, and their exceeding great reward*, Gen. xv. 1. And there are other promises respecting the forgiveness of sin; as when God says, *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for*

*mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins*, Isa. xliii. 25. and, that we may consider this in its utmost extent, the apostle says as much as can be expressed in words, which is the consequence of God's being a covenant-God to his people, when he tells them, *All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; all are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

II. Man could not have been made partaker of these invaluable blessings contained in this covenant, without the interposition of a Mediator ; for he no sooner rebelled against God, but he was separated from his presence and deprived of all those blessings, which he might otherwise have expected ; and, on the other hand, the holiness and justice of God obliged him to testify his displeasure against him, whereby he was utterly excluded from all hope of obtaining any blessings from him : the perfections of the divine nature rendered it necessary that a satisfaction for sin committed, should be insisted on ; and this could not be given by man in his own person, nor could he reasonably expect that God should receive him into favour without it, as having rendered himself guilty in his sight, and so liable to condemnation. Therefore, since he could do nothing that had any tendency to repair the injuries which he had offered to the divine justice, if ever he have access to God, and acceptance in his sight, it must be in and through a Mediator ; which leads us to consider what we are to understand, by a mediator, and what was to be done by him, in order to the procuring this favour.

A mediator, in general, is one who interposes between two parties that are at variance, in order to make peace ; and this he does, either by endeavouring to persuade the party offended to lay aside his resentment, and forgive the injury, which is a less proper sense of the word ; or else by making an overture of satisfaction, as an inducement hereunto. In the former sense it would have been an affront to the divine Majesty, and an injury to his justice, for any one to desire that God should be reconciled, without a satisfaction given ; in the latter, we are to understand the word *Mediator*, when applied to Christ, in this answer. He is not therefore herein to be considered barely as a Mediator of intercession, as pleading that God would remit the debt, out of his mere sovereignty or grace ; but as a Mediator of satisfaction, or a Surety, entering into an obligation to answer all the demands of justice. In this respect, he is the Mediator of the covenant ; whereas, when he is sent, by God, to reveal, or make known the blessings thereof to man, he is styled, *The Messenger of the covenant*, Mal. iii. 1. It was possible for a mere creature to perform the work of a mediator, in this lower, and less proper sense of the word ; or, provided satisfaction were



given to the justice of God, to intercede with him for the sinner, or intreat him to turn away from the fierceness of his wrath, which sin deserved, in which sense Moses is styled a *mediator*, and in no other \*; so some understand that text, as spoken of him, when the apostle says, Gal. iii. 19. of the law, that *it was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator* †; and, agreeably hereunto, Moses says, *I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to shew you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid, by reason of the fire*, Deut. v. 5. and elsewhere, after Israel had sinned, in worshipping the golden calf, he says, *You have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord: peradventure, I shall make an atonement for your sin*, Exod. xxxii. 30. not that he was to be accounted a mediator of satisfaction, for the atonement he hoped to make, was by entreaty, or humble supplication, that God would not destroy them, as they had deserved. This I call a less proper sense of the word *Mediator*; whereas, in this answer, Christ is styled a Mediator, in the same sense in which he was a Redeemer, or Surety, for man, or made a proper atonement to procure reconciliation between God and man by his blood, of which more will be considered, when we speak concerning Christ's priestly office.

III. It is a very great instance of grace, that God should admit of a Mediator, who might have exacted the debt of us in our own persons; and, we being unable to pay it, might have punished us with everlasting destruction. That he was not obliged to admit of a Mediator, will appear, if we consider the nature of the debt due from us, who were obliged to perform perfect obedience, or else to suffer punishment; and therefore he might have refused to have allowed of this to be performed by another, in our stead: in this case, it is not like as when pecuniary debts are paid, which cannot be refused by the creditor, though paid by one that is surety for the debtor. But, since this will be more particularly considered, when we speak concerning the satisfaction which Christ gave to the justice of God, as our great High-Priest, all that we shall add, concerning it, at present, is, that it was an instance of that grace, which was displayed in the covenant, in which Christ is considered as a Mediator of satisfaction.

IV. The grace of God farther appears, in that he not only admitted of a Mediator, but provided one. It was impossible for fallen man to find out any one that would so much as plead his cause, or speak a word in his behalf, till satisfaction were first given; and no mere creature could pay unto God a ransom that was worthy of his acceptance, or available, to answer the end designed thereby. If the best of creatures had under-

\* Such an one is more properly called *Intermediarius*, than *Mediator*.

† Vid. *Bez.* and *Whitby* in loc.

taken the work, it would have miscarried in his hands : How deplorable and hopeless then must the condition of fallen man for ever have been, if God had not found out the expedient himself to bring about our redemption ! this was a blessing unthought of, unasked for by him. I will not deny but that man might have some ideas of the divinity and glory of the second Person in the Godhead, as the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed to him, while in a state of innocency, as it was necessary that it should be, in order to his worshipping of each of the divine Persons, and I doubt not but he retained some ideas hereof when fallen. But it may be questioned, whether he knew that it was possible for the Son of God to be incarnate ; or suppose, for argument-sake, we allow that he had some idea of the possibility thereof ; yet he could never have known that he was willing to submit to this astonishing instance of condescension, and thereby to put himself in the sinner's room, that he might procure that redemption that was necessary for him. This mystery of the divine will was hid in God, and therefore could never have been known by him without revelation, and consequently would not have afforded him any matter of relief in his deplorable state. How wonderful therefore was the grace of God, that he should find out this expedient, and lay help on one that is mighty, or provide one to do that for him, which none else could have done !

And to this we may add, that it was no less an instance of divine grace, that God the Son should consent to perform this work for him : his undertaking it, was without the least force or compulsion ; for that would have been inconsistent with his consenting to become a Surety for us, and, as such, to suffer in our room and stead, since all punishment must either be deserved by him, that bears it, or else voluntarily submitted to : The former of these can by no means be said of Christ ; for a personal desert of punishment is inconsistent with his spotless purity, and would have rendered the price, laid down by him for our redemption, invalid ; therefore he voluntarily condescended to engage in this work. He gave his life a ransom for many ; and this is considered as a peculiar display of grace in him, as the apostle expresses it, *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet, for your sakes, he became poor, that ye, through his poverty, might be rich*, 2 Cor. viii. 9.

V. This Mediator being provided for man, without his desert or expectation, we proceed to consider him as offered to him, and, together with him, life and salvation. This is the great design of the gospel, to discover, or make an overture hereof to him ; without this, the gospel could not be preached, nor a visible publication made of the grace of the covenant con-

tained herein : but, since the overture of grace, or the call of God to accept of, and embrace Christ, as offered in the gospel, is more particularly considered under a following answer \*, we shall reserve the farther consideration of this matter to it.

VI. It is farther said, in this answer, that the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in his requiring faith, as the condition to interest believers in Christ. This expression may be allowed of, or excepted against, according to the method taken to explain it, which we shall endeavour to do, and therein shew in what sense we deny the covenant of grace to be conditional ; and then enquire, whether there be not another sense, agreeable to the divine perfections, in which these words may be understood, and other expressions, of the like nature, frequently used by divines, in which faith is styled a condition thereof ; and accordingly we shall enquire,

1. What we are to understand by a person's having an interest in Christ. This implies our having a right to claim him, as our Mediator, Surety, Advocate, and Saviour, and with him all those spiritual blessings, which are purchased and applied by him to those whom he has redeemed ; so that such an one may say, upon good grounds, Christ is mine, together with *all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in him*.

Here let it be considered, that it is one thing to say, that Christ is the Redeemer and Saviour of man, or, in particular, of his elect, who are given to him for this end ; and another thing for a person to say, he is my Redeemer or Saviour : the former of these is a truth, founded in scripture-revelation ; and accordingly every one may say, as Moses expresses it, *Yea, he loved the people*, Deut. xxxiii. 3. or his peculiar chosen people ; or, as the apostle says, *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it*, Eph. v. 25. But he, who has an interest in Christ, has a right to claim him, as his Saviour, and therefore may say, with the apostle, *He loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20. This I rather choose to express, by a believer's having a right to claim him as his Saviour, than his being actually enabled so to do, inasmuch as many have an interest in Christ, who are destitute of that assurance, which would give them a comfortable sense thereof in their own souls.

2. We are now to consider how faith is said to be required, as the condition to interest us in Christ ; or how far this expression may be qualified and explained, without asserting any thing derogatory to the glory of God, or the grace of the covenant. The word *condition*, though often used when we speak of contracts between man and man, as an essential ingredient therein, is not so plainly contained in those explications of the covenant of grace, which we have in scripture ; and, whenever we use it,

\* See Quest. lxxii.



with a particular application thereunto, we must understand it in such a sense, as is agreeable to the divine perfections. Therefore, that we may compare these two senses of the word *condition* together, in order to our determining how far it may be used, or laid aside, in explaining this doctrine, let us consider,

(1.) That in human covenants, in which things are promised on certain conditions, these conditions are supposed to be possible to be performed, otherwise the promise, depending thereon, is rendered void, and it contains no other than a virtual denial to make it good. Thus the king of Israel did not, at first, understand the message sent him by the king of Syria, requiring of him to heal Naaman of his leprosy, as a condition of peace and friendship between them; and the inference he makes from it was, that he had a design to seek a quarrel against him; and his reasoning would have been just, had it been intended in this sense, since the condition was not in his own power. Moreover, if a master should tell his servant, that he would give him a reward, in case he would perform the work of ten days in one, he would conclude nothing else from it, but that he was resolved not to give him any thing. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, we must consider whether faith, when it is a condition of the covenant of grace, be in our own power or no. There are some external acts thereof, indeed, which are so; but these are too low to be deemed conditions of salvation, or of the blessings of the covenant of grace; and as for those acts which are supernatural, or the effects of the exceeding greatness of the power of God, though they are inseparably connected with salvation, yet they are not in our power; so as that we may conclude, that they are proposed as conditions, in the same sense as those things are said to be, that are supposed to contain this ingredient in them.

In this respect, the covenant of grace, as to the conditionality of it, differs from the covenant of innocency, in which perfect obedience, which was the condition thereof, was so far in man's power, that he could have performed it, without the super-added assistance of divine grace: but when, on the other hand, perfect obedience is considered, as a condition of fallen man's *entering into life*, in which sense our Saviour's reply to the young man's question, in Matt. xix. 17. is understood by many, this is a plain intimation that eternal life is not to be obtained this way, inasmuch as the condition is impossible.

(2.) When conditions are insisted on, in human covenants, it is generally supposed, that though it be possible for the person, that enjoins them, to assist, and enable him, who is under this obligation, to perform them, yet he will not give him that assistance; for, if he does, the contract can hardly be reckoned conditional, but absolute: thus if a creditor should tell an in-

solvent debtor, that he will discharge him, provided he pays the debt, and, at the same time, gives him to understand that he will supply him with a sum of money, that shall enable him to do it, this is altogether the same as though he had discharged him, without any conditional demand of payment. This I cannot but mention, because there are some persons, who speak of faith, as a condition of the covenant of grace, and, at the same time, take it for granted, that it is not in our own power to perform it: nevertheless, since God has promised that he will work it in us, they conclude it to be conditional; whereas such a promise as this would render the covenant absolute, or, at least, not conditional, in the same sense, in which human covenants are, and only infer what we do not deny, that there is a necessary connexion between that grace, which God will enable us to perform, and salvation, which he has promised in this covenant.

(3.) When any thing is promised to another, on condition that he do what is enjoined on him, it is generally supposed that it is a dubious and uncertain matter whether this condition shall be fulfilled, and the promise take place; or, as I may express it, every condition contains not a necessary, but an uncertain connexion between the promised advantage, and the duty enjoined, and that for this reason, because all human covenants depend on the power and will of men, who are under conditional engagements to perform what is demanded therein; and these are supposed to be mutable and defective, and, as far as they are so, the performance of the condition may be reckoned dubious; and he that made the promise is liable to the same uncertainty, whether he shall make it good or no. This will hardly be denied, by those who defend the other side of the question, who, in explaining the nature of human liberty, generally suppose, that every one, who acts freely, might do the contrary; therefore they must, from hence, conclude, that, if the performing the conditions of a covenant be the result of man's free will, it is possible for him not to perform them, and therefore it must be a matter of uncertainty, whether a person, who promises a reward upon the performance of these conditions, will confer it or no. But, however this may be applied to human covenants, we are not to suppose that faith, or any other grace, is, in this respect, a condition of the covenant of grace, as though God's conferring the blessings promised therein were dependent on the will of man, as determining itself to the exercise of these graces; in this respect, we cannot but deny the covenant of grace to be conditional.

(4.) If we take an estimate of the worth and value of a condition enjoined, the advantages that he, who enjoins it, expects to receive from it, or the reference that the performance thereof

has to the procuring the blessing promised, in which case the person, who has fulfilled it, may be said to merit, or have whereof to glory in himself, as to what concerns the part he has performed therein: this must not be applied to any transaction between God and man, and therefore is wholly to be excluded from those ideas, which are contained in the word *condition*, when applied to the covenant of grace, as will be allowed by most, who do not give into the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. Concerning the worth and value of faith, and all other graces, I would not be thought, in the least, to depreciate or divest them of that excellency, which they have, above all other effects of God's power and blessings of providence; whereas certainly we ought to bless God for them, or glory in him, as the Author of them: but that which we would fence against in this matter, is nothing more than what our Saviour does, when he says, *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants*, Luke xvii. 10. And I would not have any one suppose, that whatever condition is performed by us, has such a value put on it, as that eternal life is hereupon due to us, in a way of debt, which would make way for boasting. It is true, the conditions which Christ performed in that branch of the covenant, which more immediately respected himself, which some call the covenant of redemption, were properly meritorious, and the blessings he purchased thereby were given him in a way of debt, and not as an undeserved favour: but, if we suppose that there is the same reference of faith, or any other grace acted by us, to that salvation, which we expect, we turn the covenant of grace into a covenant of works, and resolve that into ourselves which is due to God alone.

But since many excellent divines have asserted faith to be a condition of the covenant of grace, who do not understand the word *condition*, either as containing in it any thing dubious or uncertain on the one hand, or meritorious on the other; and probably they choose to express themselves so, in compliance with custom, and to explain away the common ideas of the word *condition*, as applied to human covenants, rather than altogether to lay it aside; and, it may be, they do this, lest they should be thought to deny the necessary connexion between faith and salvation: I shall therefore, for the same reason, conclude this head with the following propositions, whereby our not using the word *condition*, may be vindicated, from any just exception; or, our using of it may not appear to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, or the grace of this covenant. Therefore,

1st, We shall lay down this as an undoubted truth, the denial whereof would be subversive of all religion, that faith, and



all other graces, are required by God, and our obligation thereunto is indispensable ; whether it be reckoned a condition of the covenant or no, it is no less a duty. (a) It is true, there are

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(a) "The law of God itself requires no creature to love him, or obey him, beyond his *strength*, or with more than all the powers which he possesses. If the inability of sinners to believe in Christ, or to do things spiritually good, were of this nature, it would undoubtedly form an excuse in their favour; and it must be as absurd to exhort them to such duties, as to exhort the blind to look, the deaf to hear, or the dead to walk. But the inability of sinners is not such as to induce the Judge of all the earth, (who cannot do other than right) to abate in his requirements. It is a fact that he does require them, and that without paying any regard to their inability, *to love him, and to fear him, and to do all his commandments always*. The blind are admonished *to look, the deaf to hear, and the dead to arise*. Isa. xlii. 18. Ephes. v. 14. If there were no other proof than what is afforded by this single fact, it ought to satisfy us that the blindness, deafness, and death of sinners, to that which is spiritually good, is of a different nature from that which furnishes an excuse. This however is not the only ground of proof. The thing speaks for itself. There is an essential difference between an inability which is independent of the inclination, and one that is owing to nothing else. It is equally impossible, no doubt, for any person to do that which he has no mind to do, as to perform that which surpasses his natural powers; and hence it is that the same terms are used in the one case as in the other. Those who were under the dominion of envy and malignity, *could not speak peaceably*; and those who have *eyes full of adultery, cannot cease from sin*. Hence also the following language—*How can ye, being evil, speak good things?—The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them—The carnal mind is enmity against God; and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be—They that are in the flesh cannot please God—No man can come to me, except the Father who sent me draw him*.—It is also true, that many have affected to treat the distinction between natural and moral inability as more curious than solid. 'If we be unable, say they, we are unable. As to the nature of the inability, it is a matter of no account. Such distinctions are perplexing to plain Christians, and beyond their capacity.' But surely the plainest and weakest Christian in reading his bible, if he pay any regard to what he reads, must perceive a manifest difference between the blindness of Bartimeus, who was ardently desirous that *he might receive his sight*, and that of the unbelieving Jews, who *closed their eyes, lest they should see, and be converted, and healed*; Mark x. 51. Matt. xii. 15. and between the want of the natural sense of hearing, and the state of those *who have ears, but hear not*.

So far as my observation extends, those persons who affect to treat this distinction as a matter of mere curious speculation, are as ready to make use of it as other people where their own interest is concerned. If they be accused of injuring their fellow-creatures, and can allege that what they did was not *knowingly*, or of *design*, I believe they never fail to do so: or when charged with neglecting their duty to a parent, or a master; if they can say in truth that they were *unable* to do it at the time, *let their will have been ever so good*, they are never known to omit the plea: and should such a master or parent reply by suggesting that their want of ability arose from want of *inclination*, they would very easily understand it to be the language of reproach, and be very earnest to maintain the contrary. You never hear a person, in such circumstances, reason as he does in religion. He does not say, "If I be unable, I am unable; it is of no account whether it be of this kind or that:" but labours with all his might to establish the difference. Now if the subject be so clearly understood and acted upon where interest is concerned, and never appears difficult but in religion, it is but too manifest where the difficulty lies. If by fixing the guilt of our conduct upon our father Adam, we can sit comfortably in our nest; we shall be very averse to a sentiment that tends to disturb our repose, by planting a thorn in it.

It is sometimes objected, that the inability of sinners to believe in Christ, is not the effect of their depravity: for that Adam himself in his purest state was

some who distinguish between the obligation of a law, and that of a covenant; the former of which depends on an express command; the latter is the result of some blessings promised or

only a *natural man*, and had no power to perform spiritual duties. But this objection belongs to another topic, and has, I hope, been already answered. To this, however, it may be added—*The natural man who receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*, (1 Cor. ii. 14.) is not a man possessed of the holy image of God, as was Adam, but of mere natural accomplishments; as were the *wise men of the world*, the philosophers of Greece and Rome, to whom the things of God were *foolishness*. Moreover, if the inability of sinners to perform spiritual duties, were of the kind alleged in the objection, they must be equally unable to commit the opposite sins. He that from the constitution of his nature is absolutely unable to understand, or believe, or love a certain kind of truth, must of necessity be alike unable to *shut his eyes* against it, to disbelieve, to reject, or to hate it. But it is manifest that all men are capable of the latter; it must therefore follow, that nothing but the depravity of their hearts renders them incapable of the former.

Some writers, as hath been already observed, have allowed that sinners are the subjects of an inability which arises from their depravity; but they still contend that this is not *all*; but that they are both *naturally* and *morally* unable to believe in Christ; and this they think agreeable to the scriptures, which represent them as both *unable* and *unwilling* to come to him for life. But these two kinds of inability cannot consist with each other, so as both to exist in the same subject, and towards the same thing. A moral inability supposes a natural ability. He who never in any state was possessed of the power of seeing, cannot be said to *shut his eyes* against the light. If the Jews had not been possessed of natural powers, equal to the knowledge of Christ's doctrine, there had been no justice in that cutting question and answer, *Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word*. A total physical inability must of necessity supersede a moral one. To suppose, therefore, that the phrase, *No man can come to me*, is meant to describe the former; and, *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life*, the latter; is to suppose that our Saviour taught what is self-contradictory.

Some have supposed that in ascribing physical or natural power to men, we deny their *natural depravity*. Through the poverty of language, words are obliged to be used in different senses. When we speak of men as *by nature* depraved, we do not mean to convey the idea of sin being an essential part of human nature, or of the constitution of man as man: our meaning is, that it is not a mere effect of education and example; but is from his very birth so interwoven through all his powers, so ingrained, as it were, in his very soul, as to grow up with him, and become natural to him.

On the other hand, when the term *natural* is used as opposed to *moral*, and applied to the powers of the soul, it is designed to express those faculties which are strictly a part of our nature as men, and which are necessary to our being accountable creatures. By confounding these ideas we may be always disputing, and bring nothing to an issue.

Finally, it is sometimes suggested, that to ascribe natural ability to sinners to perform things spiritually good, is to nourish their self-sufficiency; and that to represent their inability as only *moral*, is to suppose that it is not insuperable, but may after all be overcome by efforts of their own. But surely it is not necessary, in order to destroy a spirit of self-sufficiency, to deny that we are men, and accountable creatures; which is all that natural ability supposes. If any person imagine it possible, of his own accord to chuse that to which he is utterly averse, let him make the trial.

Some have alleged, that 'natural power is only sufficient to perform natural things; and that spiritual power is required to the performance of spiritual things.' But this statement is far from accurate. Natural power is as necessary to the performance of spiritual, as of natural things: we must possess the powers of men in order to perform the duties of good men. And as to spiritual power, or, which is the same thing, a right state of mind, it is not properly a faculty of

conferred, which has in it the obligation of a law, but not the formal nature of it; and therefore they conclude, that we are commanded by God, as a Lawgiver, to believe and repent, but that it is more proper to say, we are rather engaged by him, as a covenant-God, than commanded to exercise these graces: but this dispute is rather about the propriety of words, than the main substance of the doctrine itself; and therefore I shall enter no farther into this critical enquiry, but content myself with the general assertion, that faith, and all other graces are necessary duties; without which, *it is impossible to please God*, to use the apostle's expression, Heb. xi. 6. or to have any right to the character of Christians.

2dly, Faith, and all other graces, are to be also considered as blessings, promised in the covenant of grace. This appears from those scriptures that speak of them as *the gifts of God*, Eph. ii. 8. purchased by the blood of Christ, and so founded on *his righteousness*, 2 Pet. i. 1. and wrought in us by his Spirit, and the *exceeding greatness of his power*, Eph. i. 19. and as discriminating blessings, which all are not partakers of, as the apostle says, *All men have not faith*, 2 Thess. iii. 2.

This may be farther argued, from what Christ undertook to purchase for, and apply to his people, as their federal Head; so that, in pursuance hereof, all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, are bestowed on them, in him; and hereby the covenant is made good to them, as God is said, *together with Christ, to give them all things*, Rom. viii. 32. First, Christ is given for a covenant of his people, and then, upon his fulfilling what he undertook to procure for them, all that grace, which is treasured up in him, is applied to them; therefore faith, and other concomitant graces, are covenant-blessings.

3dly, There is a certain connexion between faith, with other concomitant graces, and salvation. But this having been considered elsewhere, together with the sense of those scriptures, that seem to be laid down in a conditional form, from whence the arguments, to prove the conditionality of the covenant of grace, are generally taken;\* all that we shall add, at present, is, that since, in this eternal covenant between the Father and the Son, it was agreed, established, and, on our Saviour's part, undertaken, that the elect should be not only redeemed, but sanctified, and enabled to exercise all grace, before they are brought to glory, this is made good to them in this covenant; and therefore, as the consequence of Christ's purchase, faith,

\* See Vol. 1. page 479, 480.

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the soul, but a quality which it possesses: and which though it be essential to the actual performance of spiritual obedience, yet is not necessary to our being under obligation to perform it."

FULLER.



and all other graces, are wrought in the soul, which afterwards, in receiving the end of faith, is brought to eternal salvation; so that we may as well separate Christ's undertaking to redeem his people from their attaining salvation, as we can his applying those graces which accompany it.

However, when we speak of these graces, as connected with salvation, we must not conclude that they are the cause thereof. Though we are saved in a way of believing, we are not saved for our faith; and therefore I cannot but approve of what is observed by many divines, who treat of this subject, that these graces are the way to heaven, though Christ's righteousness be the cause of our coming there.\* I am sensible there are some who express their dislike of some of the most unexceptionable modes of speaking, if not altogether agreeable to those which they make use of, who can hardly approve of any one's asserting, that faith, and other graces, are the way to salvation; partly, because they are the beginning of salvation, and principally, because Christ styles himself, *The Way*, John xiv. 6. But to this it may be replied, that though grace be glory begun, yet it may as truly be said to be the way to complete salvation, as the traveller's setting out, and going forward on his journey, is the way to the end thereof, without which it can never be attained; and, though Christ be the way to salvation, as every thing that tends to fit us for, and bring us to it, is founded on what he did for us, as Mediator; yet this does not, in the least, overthrow the connexion of grace with glory, in the method in which he brings his people to it, by first working faith, and all other graces in them, before the work is brought to perfection, or the top-stone thereof is laid.

4thly, If we assert more than this, namely, that faith is a condition of the covenant of grace, or, as it is expressed in this answer, a condition to interest believers in Christ, we must distinguish between God's bestowing the blessings of the covenant of grace, pursuant to his secret will, or his eternal purpose; and our having a visible ground, or reason, to claim an interest in them; the former of these cannot be supposed to be conditional, without making God dependent on our act; the latter may, and, I think, ought to be deemed so. Thus faith is a condition, or an internal qualification, without which no one has a warrant to conclude his interest in, or lay claim to the saving blessings of the covenant of grace, so that when it is said to be a condition to interest believers in Christ, in this answer, we are to understand it, as that which evinces our claim to him, or gives us ground to conclude, that we are redeemed by him, and to expect that he will bestow upon us complete

\* *The former of these is generally styled, Via ad regnum; the latter, Causa regnandi.*

salvation. To deny this, would be to suppose, that an unbeliever has a warrant to conclude that Christ loved and gave himself for him, or that he shall be saved by him; which is a doctrine that I cannot but oppose with the greatest detestation, as what contains in it an unwarrantable presumption, and leads to licentiousness, which, I hope, nothing, that has been said on this subject, has the least tendency to do. Thus we have considered how faith may be said to be a condition of our laying claim to an interest in Christ; we proceed,

VII. To consider how the grace of God is glorified, in his having ordained, that we should apprehend or discern our interest in Christ, and the blessings of the covenant, by faith. Of all other graces, faith is that which has the greatest tendency to discover to the soul its own vileness, and nothingness; and, indeed, every thing that we behold in Christ its object, has a tendency to abase us in our own sight. Do we, by faith, behold Christ's fulness? This has a tendency to humble us, under a sense of our own emptiness. Do we look on Christ as the Fountain of all righteousness and strength? This leads us to see that we are destitute hereof in ourselves; so that, as faith beholds all that we have, or hope for, as being founded on, and derived from Christ, and gives us hereupon the greatest sense of our own unworthiness, this is in its own nature adapted to advance the grace of God; and therefore God, in taking this method to apply the blessings of the covenant, requiring faith, as an instrument, hereof, ordained the best expedient, to illustrate, and set forth his own grace as displayed therein. But since it is a very difficult matter to believe, as this grace of faith is the gift and effect of the power of God, we are now to consider,

VIII. That the grace of the covenant is farther manifested, in that God has promised, and pursuant thereunto, gives his Holy Spirit to work faith, and all other graces that are connected with, or flow from it. That we have in the covenant of grace a promise of the Holy Spirit, to work in us, that grace which God requires, is very evident; for he says, *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications*, Zech. xii. 10. and elsewhere, God promises *to pour his Spirit upon their seed, and his blessings upon their offspring*, Isa. xlv. 3. and this is farther set forth, in a metaphorical way, when he promises *to sprinkle clean water on his people, and that he would cleanse them from all their filthiness, and from all their idols, and give them a new heart, and put a new spirit within them, and take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them an heart of flesh*, and all this is said to be done by *his Spirit*, which he promised *to put within them*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. And more

particularly, the Spirit, as working faith in the hearts of believers, is called, for that reason, *The Spirit of faith*, 2 Cor. iv. 13. and all other graces are called, *The fruit of the Spirit*, Gal. v. 22, 23. so that they are from the Spirit, as the Author of all grace, and they proceed from faith, as one grace tends to excite another: thus the heart is said *to be purified by faith*, Acts xv. 9. which is said also *to work by love*, Gal. v. 6. and hereby we are enabled *to overcome the world*; and this produces all holy obedience, which is called, *The obedience of faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. Thus concerning the Spirit's working faith and all other graces.

Again, it is farther added, that the truth and sincerity of faith is evidenced as well as the grace of faith wrought by the Spirit; and this is also a blessing promised in the covenant of grace. Hereby we are enabled to discern our interest in Christ, and our right to all the blessings that accompany salvation; in which respect, the *secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he shews them his covenant*, Psal. xxv. 14. He not only discovers to them that there is such a dispensation of grace in general, but that they have a right to the blessings promised therein, and accordingly *seals them unto the day of redemption*, Eph. iv. 30. and hereby they are enabled to walk comfortably, as knowing in whom they have believed, and, are induced to the greatest thankfulness, as those, who are under the highest obligations to God, who promises and bestows these, and all other blessings, whereby his grace is abundantly manifested, in this covenant.

QUEST. XXXIII. *Was the covenant of grace always administered after one and the same manner?*

ANSW. The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner; but the administrations of it, under the Old Testament, were different from those under the New.

QUEST. XXXIV. *How was the covenant of grace administered under the Old Testament.*

ANSW. The covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were, for that time, sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

QUEST. XXXV. *How is the covenant of grace administered under the New Testament?*



**ANSW.** Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited the same covenant of grace was, and still is, to be administered in the preaching of the word ; and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, in which, grace and salvation is held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.

**H**AVING considered the nature of the covenant, in which God has promised salvation to his people, and how his grace is manifested therein, we proceed to speak concerning the various dispensations thereof, or the way in which God has been pleased, from time to time, to discover and apply the blessings contained in it, for the encouragement of his people to hope for salvation. This he has done, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, Heb. i. 1. the first method of administration was before Christ's incarnation ; the other, in all succeeding ages, to continue to the end of the world. Accordingly we are led to consider,

I. How the covenant of grace was administered under the Old Testament. As God has always had a church in the world, in the earliest ages thereof, which has been the seat of his special presence, and been favoured with the displays of his glory ; so he has made known, and applied to them, the blessings of salvation, or the promises of this covenant, in which they are contained. How he has done this, is particularly considered in this answer ; in which there is something supposed, namely, that it was absolutely necessary, for the salvation of the elect, that God should, some way or other, reveal Christ to them, by whom they were to obtain remission of sins ; for he was to be the object of their faith, as well as the fountain of their blessedness. This he could not have been, unless he had taken some methods to lead the world into the knowledge of his Person, and that work he designed to engage in, whereby they, who lived before his incarnation, might be encouraged to look for the benefits which he would procure, by what he was to do and suffer, in order thereunto. Now, that he has done so, and that the method which he has taken therein, was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah, is what we are particularly to consider, and so shall shew,

1. That God revealed Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, to his church of old. There were two ways by which he did this ; one was by express words, or an intimation given from heaven, that the Messiah, the prince of life, should, in the fulness of time, take our nature, and dwell among us ; and that what he was then to be, and do, should be conducive to the salvation of those who lived before his incarnation, as much as though he had done this from the beginning of the

world : the other was, by types, or significant ordinances, which are only different ways of discovering the same important doctrines to them.

(1.) God revealed Christ then to come to the Old Testament church, by promises and prophecies ; to the end, that though they were not, at that time, to behold him, as manifested in the flesh, they might take a view of him by faith, and hereby he might be rendered the object of their desire and expectation, that when he came, it might be no unlooked-for event, but the accomplishment of those promises and predictions that related thereunto : thus God told Abraham, not only that he should be blessed with a numerous off-spring, but that, *in his seed*, that is, in the Messiah, who should descend from him, *all the nations of the earth should be blessed* ; he likewise says to Israel, by Moses, *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from among thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him ye shall hearken*, Deut. xviii. 15. and, in following ages, there were promises and predictions, that gave farther light, concerning the person and offices, the sufferings and glory of the Messiah, as it is said, *To him give all the prophets witness*, Acts x. 43. And the prophet Isaiah is so express, in the account he gives of this matter, that he is styled, by some, the evangelical prophet ; what he says, concerning him, is so particular, as though it had been an history of what was past, rather than a prophecy of what was to come ; accordingly he foretells, that he should be *born*, or *given*, as a public blessing to the world, and describes him not only as having *the government upon his shoulder*, but as having the perfections of the divine nature, which discover him fit for that important trust, when he styles him, *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*, Isa. ix. 6. And, as he speaks of his birth, so he intimates, that he should be *born of a virgin* ; chap. vii. 14. and he describes him, in chap. liii. as condescending to bear our sins, as standing in our room and stead, designing hereby to make atonement for them ; he speaks of him, as *brought like a lamb to the slaughter*, and *cut off out of the land of the living*, *making his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, and after this, that *he should prolong his days*, and that the consequence hereof should be glorious to himself, and of the highest advantage to his people : and he describes him elsewhere, chap. lxiii. 1, &c. in a most elegant manner as one triumphing over conquered enemies ; *travelling*, or pursuing his victories, *in the greatness of his strength*, and making it appear that he is *mighty to save*.

Another prophet speaks of him as a *Branch* that should grow out of the root or stock of David, when it was almost dead and dry, and that he should set up a more glorious throne, and ex-

ercise a government over his people in a spiritual way, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. And the prophet Micah gives us an account of the very place of his birth, and speaks of Bethlehem, as rendered famous and renowned by his being born therein, *who should be a ruler in Israel*, though otherwise it was *little among the thousands of Judah*, Micah v. 2. Another prophet signifies his coming at that time, when God would *shake all nations*, that is, fill the world with civil commotions, and cause it to feel the sad effects of those wars, whereby the kingdoms of the world had been dis-jointed, and many of them broken in pieces, that then *the desire of all nations should come, and fill his house*, to wit, the second temple, *with glory*, Hag. ii. 7. And the prophet Daniel speaks of him as the Messiah, or Christ, the character by which he was most known, when he was here on earth, and gives a chronological account of the time when he should come, and *be cut off, though not for himself*, and hereby *confirm the covenant*, and at the same time, *cause the sacrifice and oblation*, that is, the ordinances of the ceremonial law, *to cease*, and so make way for another dispensation of the covenant, to wit, that which we are under, which was to succeed in the room thereof.

(2.) The covenant of grace was also administered by the various types and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which were all significant signs of that grace, that should be displayed in the gospel, which was to be obtained by Christ. Many of these types and ordinances were instituted before the whole body of the ceremonial law was given from mount Sinai. The first we read of was that of sacrifices, which were offered in the first ages of the world, whereby they had an early intimation given them of the blood of the covenant, which should be shed to expiate sin. And, after this, circumcision was instituted, first given to Abraham, as a visible mark, or token, of the covenant, immediately before the birth of Isaac, the promised seed, at that time, when God was pleased to enter into covenant with him, Gen. xvii. 9, 10. and this ordinance was continued in the church, throughout all the generations thereof, till our Saviour's time, and is explained by the apostle, as a sign, or *seal of the righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11.

Another type was the passover, which was first instituted in commemoration of Israel's departure out of Egypt, which had in it many significant rites and ceremonies, whereby our redemption, by Christ, was set forth; upon which occasion, the apostle calls him *our Passover, who is sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. and in allusion hereunto, he is styled, *The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29.

There were many other ceremonial ordinances, or types, which God gave to the Jewish nation, which were significant representations of the grace that was to be displayed in the gos-



pel, or, as it is expressed in this answer, they fore-signified Christ then to come, which contained as the apostle expresses it, *A shadow of good things to come*, Heb. x. 1. so that they all pointed at the grace of the covenant, or the accomplishment of what was to be performed by Christ, after his incarnation : but this will be more particularly considered, when we speak of the ceremonial law, as distinguished from the moral, under a following answer \*. Therefore, at present, we shall only consider the types in general, and their reference to the grace of the covenant, whereby the Old Testament church were led into the knowledge of the Messiah then to come, together with what he was to do and suffer, to purchase and apply the blessings of this covenant to his people. And here we shall shew,

1st, That there were typical ordinances under the ceremonial law. This we are obliged to maintain, against those who have advanced several things relating to the origin of the ceremonial law, which tend very much to divest it of its spirituality and glory †, when they assert, that all the rites and ordinances thereof were derived from the Egyptians ; and that they were first observed by them, before known and received by the church ; and that the reason why God accommodated his law thereunto, was because he knew how tenacious they were of that religion in which that generation had been trained up in Egypt, and how difficult it would be for them wholly to lay it aside, and to give into another way of worship, which was altogether foreign to it : nevertheless, they say that he cut off, or separated from it, every thing that was idolatrous, and adapted other things to that mode of worship, which he thought most conducive to his glory. But though he commanded his people, when they left Egypt, to borrow vessels of silver and gold, to be used in that service they were to perform in the wilderness ; yet far be it from us to suppose, that God, in ordaining this law, borrowed any part of it from them. It is true, there were rites of worship used by the Egyptians, and other nations, which had some affinity with the divine law, and were received by them in common with other heathen nations, by tradition, from the church, in former ages ; and it cannot be denied, but that the Israelites sometimes corrupted the worship of God, by introducing some things into it, which were practised by neighbouring nations : but God gave no countenance to this matter, by accommodating his law to theirs. But since this has been purposely and largely insisted on, with much learning and judgment, by others ‡, I shall pass it over.

There are others, who make farther advances on this subject,

\* See Quest. xcii.

† Vid. Spencer. de leg. Hebr. and ejusd. Dissert. de Urim & Thummim ; & Marshamii Can. Chron.

‡ Vid. Witsii Egyptiaca.

tending to overthrow that which appears to be the main design of the ceremonial law, together with the spiritual meaning of it; these not only conclude, that the main end of God's giving it to the Jews, was because it was necessary that there should be some form of worship erected, otherwise they would have invented one of their own, or practised that which they had received from the Egyptians; and the more pompous and ceremonious this form was, and especially the nearer it came to that of neighbouring nations, it would more readily be received and complied with: but, that there was no design herein to typify, or shadow forth Christ, or the blessings of the covenant of grace; these therefore, were commanded duties \*, (whereby the people were to be kept employed,) but not typical ordinances. But it is very strange that any, who have read some explications hereof, occasionally mentioned in the Old Testament, and especially that large comment on the ceremonial law, given by the apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, should embrace this opinion.

2dly, Whatever ordinances were typical, they respected Christ, his person, offices, the grace of the covenant, and the way of salvation, by him; therefore I cannot approve of what I occasionally meet with, in some ancient commentators, and other modern writers, who sometimes speak of things being typical of other things besides Christ, and what relates to the work of redemption by him. Thus some speak of those notorious wicked persons mentioned in scripture, as Cain, Pharaoh, and others, as though they were types of the devil; and of Antiochus Epiphanes, as a type of Anti-christ. And others speak of some things as types of Gospel-ordinances, so they call circumcision a type of baptism, and the passover of the Lord's supper; and several writers, amongst the Papists, suppose, that the bread and wine, that was brought forth by Melchisedek to Abraham, was a type of the Eucharist, as they call that ordinance. Others speak of Noah's being saved in the ark from the deluge, as a type of baptism, being mis-led herein by a mistaken sense of the word, used by the apostle, when he says, having spoken before of Noah's being saved in the ark, *The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us*, 1 Pet. iii. 21. &c. whereas the meaning of the Greek word † is not that this was a type of baptism, but that it signified, as baptism also doth, that salvation, which we have by Christ.

3dly, When we consider what was typified by those ordinances, under the ceremonial law, we must avoid two extremes; namely, that of those who make more types, than the Holy Ghost designed in scripture; and others, who will not acknowledge many things to be types, which plainly appear to be so:

\* *Præcepta observantia.*

† *analogia.*

the former give too great scope to their wit and fancy, when they reckon every thing to be a type, that may be adapted to Christ, and the gospel-state; and accordingly suppose, many persons and actions done by them to be typical, which it is hard to prove that they were designed to be, or were looked upon as such by the Old Testament-church. Thus it would be a difficult matter to prove that Samson (especially in any other respect than as he was a Nazarite) was a type of Christ. But, if it could be proved, that the success he sometimes had in his skirmishes with the Philistines, was a type of Christ's victories over his and our enemies; yet it doth not appear, though some have extended the parallel so far, that his carrying the door and posts of the gate of Gaza to the top of a hill that is before Hebron, Judges xvi. 3. signifies Christ's resurrection. But it is abominable, when any one supposes, as some have unwarily done, that his loving a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah, ver. 4. was a type of Christ's loving the Gentile church.

But, because I would not give any occasion to conclude that I have light thoughts of the performance of some, who have explained many things, which they call types, in scripture, with a very honest and good design, to lead the world into the knowledge of several great gospel-truths; I shall take leave to distinguish between those things, which were plainly designed, in scripture, to be types, and some other, which, though it doth not appear that they were looked upon as such by the Old Testament-church, yet they may be accommodated to illustrate or explain some doctrines contained in the gospel. If any one call these methods of illustration, types, because there is some analogy or resemblance between them and Christ, or the benefits of the covenant, they may extend their illustrations as far as they please; I will not contend with them. It is not their saying, that such and such things are similitudes, by which Christ may be set forth; but their asserting that these similitudes were designed by God, to be ordinances for the faith of his church, to lead them into the knowledge of Christ, that I militate against, when I suppose that some are chargeable with an extreme, in extending this matter too far, which, it is certain, many have done.

But this may give occasion to enquire; when we may determine that a thing is designed, by God, to be a type of Christ, and the grace of the covenant? To this I answer,

(1.) As to what respects persons, or, as it is commonly expressed, personal types, though I cannot say, that every one, whose life and actions bear a very great resemblance to some things that are remarkable in the life of Christ, is a type of him, in any other sense, than, as we are led, by the analogy, or



resemblance of things, to speak of it, in a way of accommodation or illustration; yet we have some directions given us, by which we may conclude some persons to be types of Christ; one of which is, when he is called by their name: thus our Saviour's being called David, in several scriptures, Hos. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. and David's often speaking in the Person of our Saviour, in several of his Psalms, seems to intimate, that he was looked upon, by the church in his day, as a type of Christ.

Again, Moses seems to imply as much concerning himself, when he speaks of Christ as a *Prophet, whom the Lord God should raise up from among their brethren*, and he adds, that he should be *like unto him*, and consequently typified by him, Deut. xviii. 15. and the apostle seems to intimate as much, when he compares Moses and Christ together, in point of faithfulness, that *the one was faithful as a servant in God's house*, the other as *a Son over his own house*, Heb. iii. 2, 5, 6.

Again, when any remarkable actions, were done by persons mentioned in scripture, which were allowed to be typical, it follows, from thence, that the person, who was appointed to be God's minister in doing them, was a type of Christ. Thus we may conclude Joshua to have been reckoned, by Israel, a type of Christ, in leading them into the land of Canaan, upon the same ground that they had to look upon that land, as a type of the gospel-rest, which we are brought to by Christ. And, for the same reason, Solomon might be called a type of Christ, as he built the temple, which was reckoned, by the Jews, as a type of God's presence, in a way of grace with his people; and there are other passages, that might be referred to in scripture, which farther prove him to be a type of Christ.\*

And nothing is more evident, than that the priests, under the law, who were ministers in holy things, and the high priest, in a way of eminency, were types of Christ; they are so considered in the explication thereof, given in the epistle to the Hebrews; and they farther appear to be so, inasmuch as the church had sufficient ground to conclude, that their ministry was typical, or the gifts, or sacrifices that they offered, were types of what was offered by Christ, for our redemption. And this leads us,

(2.) To consider those types, which are called real, or things done, as being ordinances designed to signify the grace of the covenant. These were either occasional, or stated; the former whereof were designed for types, at those times, when the things were performed. But it doth not appear that they were so afterwards, in succeeding ages; as their *passing through*

\* See *Psalm*. lxi. the title, compared with the subject-matter of the *Psalm*, which speaks of Christ in the person of Solomon.

*the red sea, being under the cloud, their eating manna in the wilderness, and drinking water that came out of the rock.* All these things are expressly mentioned, by the apostle, as types, 1 Cor. x. 1, 3, 4. compared with ver. 11. and we may add thereto *the brazen serpent*, which was plainly a type of Christ, and, as such, our Saviour applies it to himself, in John iii. 14. But all these were occasional types, which were ordinances to the church no longer than the action was continued.

Again, there were other things, which seemed to be standing types, or ordinances, in all successive ages, till Christ the Antitype came, as circumcision, the passover, sacrifices, and other rites of worship, used in the temple service; these things being expressly mentioned, in scripture, as types, we have ground to determine them to be so. Thus concerning the covenant of grace, as revealed to the church of old.

2. We are now to consider, that the method which God took in the administration of the covenant of grace, under the Old Testament, was sufficient to build up his elect in the faith of the promised Messiah. There were, indeed, many types given to the church, but these would not have led them into the knowledge of Christ, and salvation to be obtained by him, unless God had taken some method to explain them; for they had not a natural tendency to signify Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace, as words have, according to the common sense thereof, to make known the ideas they convey: but their signification was, for the most part, if not altogether, instituted, or annexed to them, by the divine appointment, and many of them had not the least resemblance, in themselves, of what they were ordained to signify; therefore it was necessary that they should be explained. For we may say the same thing of a type, that is said of a parable, as they are both figurative representations of some less known ideas, that are designed to be conveyed thereby; now a parable is styled, by the Psalmist, *A dark saying*, Psal. lxxviii. 2. and, by the prophet Ezekiel, *A riddle*, Ezek. xvii. 2. and our Saviour, speaking thereof, in this sense, tells his disciples, that *unto them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables*, Luke viii. 10. and they are elsewhere opposed to a plain way of speaking, as when the disciples say, *Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb, or parable*, John xvi. 29. as it is rendered in the margin; so when Nathan reproved David for his sin, in the matter of Uriah, he first represented it by a parable, taken from *the rich man's robbing the poor man of his ewe-lamb*, which, before he explained the meaning of it, was not understood by him, 2 Sam. xii. 1—6. But when he told him, *Thou art the man* intended hereby, it was as evident to him, as though he had made use of the most significant words

relating to this matter. The same may be said concerning types under the Old Testament dispensation; they would have been unintelligible, had there been no explication annexed to them, whereby the spiritual meaning thereof might be understood. And, if we consider them as a part of religious worship, we cannot suppose that that consisted only in some bodily exercises, such as killing of beasts, sprinkling the blood, &c. for that is no part of religion, any otherwise than as it refers to, and leads the faith of those, who are engaged therein, into the knowledge of some things, in which it is more immediately concerned.

But this argument having been insisted on elsewhere,\* and the necessity of God's leading his church into the meaning of the ceremonial law, having been considered and proved, from the divine goodness, and a brief account having been given of the method which God took to lead them into it, which tends to obviate any objection that might be made against it we shall only observe, at present, that as there is a very clear explication given hereof, in several places in the New Testament, so there are some expressions used in the Old, which seem to refer to the spiritual meaning thereof; and, if it be allowed that the church had then the least intimation given them, either by some hints, contained in scripture, or by some other methods of revealing it, that there was a spiritual meaning affixed thereunto, which it is plain there was, then it will follow, that they might easily, from this direction, have applied this to particular instances, and have attained a very great degree of the knowledge of the spiritual meaning of these types and ordinances.

That this may farther appear, let it be considered, that they were led into several doctrines relating to the Messiah, and the offices that he was to execute as Mediator, by express words, and they must be given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness, as the Jews are at this day, if they could not understand thereby many of those great truths, which relate to the way of salvation by Christ. Now, if they were led into them, by this more plain method, they might easily accommodate the typical ordinances thereunto, and accordingly the one would be a key to the other: thus, when they were told of the Messiah's *bearing the iniquity* of his people, as the prophet Isaiah does, or of *the Lord's laying on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 4, 6. they might easily understand that the same thing was signified by some rites used in sacrificing, as when the priest was to lay his hand on the head of the sacrifice, before he slew it, and its being, upon this occasion, said *to bear the iniquity of the congregation*, Lev. iv. 4. compared with chap. xvi. 21, 22. therefore they could not be at a loss, as to the spiritual

\* See Vol. I. pages 53—56



meaning thereof. And, when we read elsewhere such expressions, as plainly refer to the thing signified, by some ceremonial ordinances, *viz. The circumcision of the heart*, Deut. xxx. 6. *The calves of the lips*, Hos. xiv. 2. *The sacrifice of thanksgiving*, Psal. cxvi. 17. and many other passages of the like nature, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they were wholly strangers to it; and therefore these types and ordinances were, in an objective way, sufficient to build them up in the faith of the Messiah.

This being considered, it may very evidently be inferred, from hence, that they had full remission of sins, and eternal life, as it is farther observed; and therefore it is not necessary to suppose, with some of the Pelagians and Socinians, that they might be saved without the knowledge of Christ; nor, with the Papists, that they were incapable of salvation, till Christ came and preached to them after his death, and so discharged them from the prison, in which they were detained; nor with some among the Protestants, who extend the bondage of the Old Testament-church so far, as though they were not fully justified, but lay under a perpetual dread of the wrath of God. This we often meet with in the writings of many, who, in other respects, explain the doctrine of the covenant of grace in a very unexceptionable way. And here I cannot but observe, what is well known, by those who live in the United Netherlands, that this matter has been debated with so much warmth in those parts, that it has occasioned divisions and misunderstandings among divines, who, in other respects, have adhered to, and well defended the doctrines of the gospel, against those who have opposed them. The judicious and learned Cocceius, whom I cannot but mention with the greatest respect, who lived about the middle of the last century, has been, and is now, followed by many divines, in those particular modes of explaining this doctrine, which he makes use of: his sentiments, indeed, about this matter, were not wholly new; but having written commentaries on several parts of scripture, he takes occasion to explain great numbers of texts, agreeably to that particular scheme, which he maintains; and while, on the one hand, he runs great lengths, in explaining what he reckons to be scripture-types and predictions, and thereby gives great scope to his imagination on the other hand, he extends the terror, bondage, and darkness, which the church was under, during the legal dispensation, farther than can well be justified, and advances several things in defending and explaining his scheme, which many divines, who do not give into his way of thinking, have excepted against.

Instead of making but two dispensations of the covenant of grace, according to the commonly received opinion, he sup-

poses that there were three; \* namely, the first from God's giving the promise to our first-parents, immediately after they fell, relating to the seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head, to his delivering the law from mount Sinai; which dispensation had nothing of terror, or bondage, in it, any more than the dispensation which we are under; and he supposes, that the church had clearer discoveries of Christ, and the blessings of the covenant, than they had after Moses's time. The second dispensation was, that which took place when God gave Israel the law from mount Sinai, which he generally describes as a yoke, which they could hardly bear; and sometimes as a curse, a rigorous dispensation, in which there was a daily remembrance of sin: and the reason of God's exercising this severity, and shutting them up in a judicial way, under terror, darkness, and bondage, was, because they revolted from him, by worshipping the golden calf, a little before the law was given; upon which occasion, God put a vail upon his ordinances, covered the mysteries of the gospel by types, and, at the same time, did not lead them into the meaning thereof, which as was before observed, would have a tendency to leave them in a state of darkness, as to the great doctrines that were signified by these types and ordinances of the ceremonial law. And this he supposes to be the meaning of what the apostle says, concerning the double vail; one put on the things themselves, the other, on the hearts of the Jews; and both these were typified by the vail, which Moses *put over his face*, 2 Cor. iii. 13—15, and this darkness was attended with distress and terror of conscience, whereby they were, as the apostle says elsewhere, *All their life-time subject to bondage*, Heb. ii. 15. which they explain, concerning the church of the Jews, under the legal dispensation. And they add, that all this continued as long as that dispensation lasted, or till it was succeeded by the third, viz. the gospel-dispensation, which we are under, whereby the church was delivered from this yoke, which neither *they, nor their fathers, were able to bear*. But that which I would take occasion to except against, in this scheme, is,

1. They seem to make the terror, bondage, and darkness, which the church was under, greater than they ought to do; for, I humbly conceive, all those scriptures, which they refer to for the proof hereof, are to be taken, not in an absolute, but a comparative sense. It is one thing to say, that this dispensation was less bright and comfortable, than the present dispensation, which we are under, is; and another thing to say,

\* *The first, he and his followers call, Oeconomia promissionis, or, ante-legalis; the second, Oeconomia legalis; the third, Oeconomia evangelica.*

that it was so dark and comfortless, as they generally represent it to be.

2. I cannot but think, as I have before observed, that the church of Israel had a clearer discerning of the meaning of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, than these divines would allow them to have had; or, at least, that the vail, that was upon their hearts, principally respected a part of them, and that in some particular ages, not in every age of the Jewish church; for some of the Old Testament-saints seem to have discovered a great degree of light in the doctrines of the gospel, as appears more especially from several of the Psalms of David, and some of the writings of the prophets.

3. Whatever degree of judicial blindness and darkness the church of the Jews might be exposed to for sin, it does not so fully appear that this was inflicted as a punishment on them, for worshipping the golden calf at the foot of the mount Sinai: but there were several instances of idolatry and apostacy from God, that gave occasion thereunto, which, when they repented of, and were reformed from, the effects of his wrath were taken away; therefore we are not to suppose, that the ceremonial law was given, at first, as a yoke, or curse, laid on them for this sin in particular.

4. We are not to extend the bondage and darkness thereof so far, with respect to any of them, as to suppose, that, under that dispensation, they had not full remission of sin; for the contrary hereto seems to be contained in several scriptures; as when it is said, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity*, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. and, *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared*, Psal. cxxx. 4. and elsewhere, *Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plentiful in mercy, to all that call upon thee; and thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin*, Psal. lxxxvi. 5. and lxxxv. 2. and elsewhere, *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*, Micah. vii. 18, 19.

These, and such-like scriptures, seem so plainly to overthrow this part of their scheme, that they are obliged, in defence thereof, to understand them all, as containing nothing else, but a prediction of that blessedness, which the New Testament-church should receive, and not as a privilege that was enjoyed under the legal dispensation, which I cannot but think to be an evasive perversion of the sense of those scriptures, but



now referred to, and others of the like nature; for it is plain that the apostle, referring to one of them, to wit, the words of the Psalmist, in Rom. iv. 6. compared with ver. 9. says, that therein *David describes the blessedness that cometh not on the circumcision only*, that is, not only on the Jews, *but on the uncircumcision also*, that is, the gospel-church; which is a plain argument, that this blessedness, that accompanies forgiveness, was a privilege, that the Old Testament-church enjoyed, and not barely a promise of what the New Testament-church was to expect: *q. d.* was the Old Testament-church the only blessed persons in enjoying forgiveness? No, says he, as they formerly enjoyed it, we who believe, are partakers of the same privilege.

And to this we may add, that, in consistency with this scheme, they entertain some unwarrantable notions about the justification of the Old Testament church. Some say, that it was less full; others, which is a more unguarded way of speaking, that it was less true; \* and, agreeably hereunto, they suppose, that they had no other ideas of the doctrine of justification, but as implying in it the divine forbearance, or not punishing sin; though they had a perpetual dread that it would be punished at last, and no comfortable sense of the forgiveness thereof.† But this is certainly an extending the terror and bondage of that dispensation farther than we have just ground, from scripture, to do, whatever turns they give to several scriptures in defence thereof; and therefore we must conclude, as it is observed in this answer, that the Old Testament-church had full remission of sins, as well as eternal salvation.

II. We are now to consider the covenant of grace, as administered under the New Testament, which is the dispensation thereof, that we are under and is to continue to the end of the world, which by way of eminency, we call the gospel-dispensation; concerning which it is observed,

\* Minus plena, or minus vera.

† For the proof of this, they often refer to that scripture in Rom. iii. 25. in which it is said, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through, or after, the forbearance, of God, which they suppose to contain an intimation of the privilege which the gospel-church enjoyed, namely, remission of sins; whereas, under the legal dispensation, there was nothing else apprehended by them, but the forbearance of God: so that the Old Testament-church had *ἡμεῖς ἀπαλλαγῇ*; the New Testament church, *ἀφένω*; and they all suppose, that they looked upon Christ as Fide-jussor, and not Expromissor, which are terms used in the civil law; the former of which signifies a person's undertaking to be a surety, and, at the same time, leaving the creditor at his liberty to exact the debt, either of him, or the debtor himself; whereas, Expromissor, signifies, a person's undertaking to be a surety, in so full and large a sense, as that, by virtue hereof, the debtor is discharged. Therefore, since they did not, so clearly, know that God would discharge them, by virtue of Christ's undertaking to be a Surety, but concluded that he might exact the debt, either of him, or them: this was the foundation of that terror and bondage, which they were perpetually subject to.

1. That it began when Christ, the Substance, was exhibited. He is called the Substance thereof, without any particular limitation of the word; and therefore we may understand thereby, either that he was the Substance of the ceremonial law, as all the promises and types thereof had a peculiar reference to him; and, as the apostle says, *To him give all the prophets witness*, Acts x. 43. or else he may be considered as the Substance of the New Testament-dispensation, the subject-matter of the ministry of the gospel. Thus the apostle speaks of *Christ crucified*, as the principal thing which *he determined to know*, or insist on, in the exercise of his ministry, and that with good reason, since all gospel-doctrines were designed to lead us to him, and set forth his glory, as the Fountain and Author of our salvation, 1 Cor. i. 23. chap. ii. 2. And both the seals of the new covenant, namely, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, signify that salvation which we enjoy, or hope for, by Christ, our consecration to him, and communion with him: thus he is truly styled the substance of both the dispensations of the covenant; the former looked forward, and pointed out Christ to come, as the object of the church's desire and expectation; the latter represents him as being come, and so the object of our joy and thankfulness, for the blessings which he has procured for us.

And this leads us to consider when it was that the New Testament-dispensation commenced, which is here said to be upon Christ's being exhibited. Christ's exhibition implies in it, either his public appearing when he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, or else it has a particular respect to the time when he first entered on his public ministry and went about doing good, confirming his mission by uncontested miracles: this he did immediately after his baptism, whereby he appeared to be the Person, whose coming the prophets had foretold, and whom John the Baptist had pointed at, and given the world ground to expect that he would immediately shew himself, in a public manner to them which he did accordingly. This appearing of Christ, was like the sun's rising after a night of darkness, and therefore, in some respects, the gospel-dispensation might be said to begin then; nevertheless, in propriety of speaking, it could not be said fully to commence till Christ's resurrection: then it was that the ceremonial law ceased, all the types and ordinances thereof having had their accomplishment in him. Thus the prophet Daniel speaks first of Christ's *being cut off*, and thereby *confirming the covenant*, and then of the *sacrifice and oblation's ceasing*, Dan. ix. 26, 27. and, when that dispensation was at an end, the gospel dispensation immediately succeeded it. We are now to consider,

2. How these two dispensations differ. They were, indeed, the same for substance, both before and since the coming of Christ, as was before observed, when we considered that the covenant of grace, notwithstanding the different dispensations thereof, is but one. And this farther appears, in that the blessings promised therein were the same, to wit, redemption through the blood of Christ, and compleat salvation by him. He was the Mediator and Fountain of all that happiness which his people enjoyed, either before or after his incarnation; nevertheless, the way of administering this covenant, under the gospel dispensation, differs from its former way;

(1.) In that it was, before this, predicted and signified, that Christ should come, and therefore the Old Testament-church waited for his appearing; and accordingly they are represented as saying, *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away; turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether*, Cant. ii. 17. But the New Testament-church adores and magnifies him, as having appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and fully accomplish the work of our redemption thereby; and, in the preaching of the gospel, he is represented as *having abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light*, and done every thing for us that is necessary to bring about our redemption. And this is also signified by the sacraments of the New Testament, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, which, though they may be justly called gospel-types, or external signs of Christ, and the blessings of the covenant of grace; yet they differ from the types under the ceremonial law, not only in the matter of them, but in that they refer to the work of redemption, as fully accomplished by him, which the ceremonial law could not from the nature of the thing, be said to have done.

(2.) The gospel-dispensation differs from the legal, and very much excels it, as grace and salvation is therein held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations. This is founded on what the apostle says, 2 Cor. iii. 7—11. when comparing the two dispensations together, he calls one *the ministration of death, or condemnation*, and describes it, as that which is now *done away*, which while it continued, was *glorious*; the other he calls, *the ministration of the Spirit, or of righteousness*, and speaks of it, as *excelling in glory*. Whether the former is styled, *The ministration of death*, because of the terrible manner in which the law was given from mount Sinai, upon which occasion the people said to Moses *Let not God speak with us, in such a way, any more, lest we die*; or whether it respects the many curses and threatenings, denounced in that dispensation, to deter the people from sin, we will not determine: but it is certain, that the apostle speaks of the gos-



pel-dispensation, as excelling in glory, which is the principal thing we are now to consider, and this it might be said to do,

1st, As grace and salvation are therein held forth with greater clearness, or evidence. This we may truly say without supposing the legal dispensation to be so dark, as that none of the church, in any age thereof, could see Christ, and the way of salvation by him, to be signified by any of its types or ordinances. We may observe, that when the apostle speaks of this dispensation, he does not say absolutely that it had no glory, but that *it had no glory in this respect by reason of*, or compared with, *the glory that excelleth*. Now the gospel-dispensation excels the legal, as to its clearness, or fulness of evidence, in that the accomplishment of the predictions, or the making good of the promises of redemption and salvation by Christ, affords greater evidence of the truth and reality of these blessings, than the bare giving the promises could be said to do; for though one gave them the expectation, the other put them into the actual possession thereof, when Christ the Substance, was, as was before observed, exhibited, and the ceremonial law had its accomplishment in him.

2dly, Under the gospel-dispensation, grace and salvation revealed therein, are attended with greater efficacy; for as the greatest part of the Old Testament-church were not so much disposed, as they ought, especially in some ages thereof, to enquire into, or endeavour to attain a clearer discerning of the spiritual meaning of the ceremonial institutions, through the blindness of their minds, and the hardness of their hearts, so the effect and consequence hereof, was answerable thereunto, inasmuch as there was but a small remnant of them, who obtained mercy to be faithful, who rejoiced to see Christ's day, and embraced the promises which they beheld afar off; whereas, in the gospel-dispensation, *the word of the Lord had free course, and was more eminently glorified* in those places where it was made known: but this will farther appear, if we consider,

3dly, That it excelled in glory, in regard of the extent thereof; for it was under this dispensation that that promise was to have its accomplishment, that Christ should be *a light to the Gentiles*, and *God's salvation unto the end of the earth*, Isa. xlix. 6. or that God would *destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that was spread over all nations*, chap. xxv. 7. It was then that a commission was given to *preach the Gospel to every creature*, Mark xvi. 15. or that Christ should be *preached unto the Gentiles and believed on in the world*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. In this respect, the gospel-dispensation certainly excelleth in glory, and it is owing hereunto that we enjoy, at present, this invaluable privilege. But if this present

dispensation be only reckoned the dawn and twilight, or the beginning of that glory that shall be revealed at Christ's second coming, as grace is sometimes styled glory begun; or if the apostle's description of it, when he says, that *we are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 22, 23. contains an intimation, that the glory, which still remains to be revealed, is nothing else but the perfection of this present dispensation, that we may conclude that it far excelleth all others in glory.

From what has been said, in comparing the former, and present dispensation of the covenant of grace, we may infer.

[1.] The care of God extended to his church, in all the ages thereof; so that he never left them without the means of grace, which, how various soever they have been as to the matter of them, have yet tended to answer the same end, namely, leading the church into the knowledge of Christ.

[2.] We may farther infer the necessity of external and visible worship, which the church was never wholly destitute of, for then it would have ceased to have been a church; and also the necessity of divine revelation, as to what respects the way of salvation by Christ; and therefore we must not conclude, that the church was, at any time, without some beams of gospel-light shining into it, or that they were left, as the Heathen are, *to seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him*, as the apostle speaks, Acts xvii. 27. or that, before the gospel-dispensation commenced, salvation was to be obtained, by adhering to the light and dictates of nature, which discovers nothing of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or of that remission of sin, which is only to be obtained through him.

[3.] Christ's having been revealed to, and consequently known by the Old Testament church, as the promised Messiah, may give some light to our understanding what we often read in the New Testament concerning persons believing in him, upon his working of miracles, or using some other methods to convince them that he was the Messiah, when, at the same time, we do not read of any particular discovery made to them relating to the glory of his Person, and offices, and the design of his coming into the world, which was necessary to their believing him, in a saving way, to be the Messiah. Thus when he converted the woman of Samaria, by revealing himself to be *that Prophet*, whom the church expected, when he told her some of the secret actions of her life, she immediately believed in him, John iv. 18, 19, 29. and many of her fellow-citizens believed on him, upon the report that she gave them hereof, ver. 39. and, when he opened the eyes of the man that

was born blind, he only asked him this question, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* and then discovers that he was the Person; and it immediately follows, that *he believed and worshipped him*, John ix. 35, 37, 38. And there were many other instances of the like nature in the New Testament, in which persons believed in Christ, before he gave them a particular account of his design in coming into the world, barely upon his working miracles, which gave them a conviction that he was the Messiah; whereas faith supposes not only a conviction that Christ is the Messiah, but a knowledge of his Person, and the offices he was to execute as such. This may very easily be accounted for, by supposing that the Jews had been before instructed in this matter, and therefore they wanted no new discoveries hereof; accordingly they believed in him, and worshipped him, as being induced hereunto, by those intimations that were given to them, under the Old-Testament dispensation, that the Messiah, whenever he appeared, would be the Object of faith and worship.

[4.] Since the gospel is more clearly preached under this present dispensation, than it was before; this tends to aggravate the sin of those who despise Christ, as revealed therein, as our Saviour says, *This is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil*, chap. iii. 19. Before our Saviour's incarnation, the Old Testament-church might be said to reject the covenant of promise, or not regard the gospel contained therein; but, under the New Testament-dispensation, sinners reject the covenant of grace, as confirmed, ratified, and sealed, by the blood of Christ; and, as the apostle says, *Count the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and therefore are thought worthy of much sorer punishment*, Heb. x. 29.

QUEST. XXXVI. *Who is the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace?*

ANSW. The only mediator of the covenant of grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and Man, in two entire distinct natures, and one Person for ever,

QUEST. XXXVII. *How did Christ, being God, become Man?*

ANSW. Christ, the Son of God, became Man by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived



by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

**N**EXT to the covenant of grace, and its various administrations, we have, in some following answers, an account of the Mediator thereof, who is set forth in the glory of his Person; the offices that he executes, and the estate in which he either was, or is, together with those accessions of glory, with which he shall perform the last part of his work in the close of time. The first thing to be considered, is the constitution of his Person, as God-man, Mediator; and here,

I. He is set forth as the only Mediator of the covenant of grace. How we are to understand his being Mediator, has been already considered \*, and it was observed, that he did not make peace, by intreating, that God would remit the debt, without giving that satisfaction, which was necessary to be made, for the securing the glory of the divine justice. Herein we militate against the Socinians, who suppose him to be styled a Mediator, only because he made known unto the world those new laws contained in the gospel, which we are obliged to obey, as a condition of God's being reconciled to us; and giving us a pattern of obedience in his conversation; and, in the close thereof, confirming his doctrine by his death; and then interceding with God, that, on these terms, he would accept of us, without any regard to the glory of his justice, which he is no farther concerned about, than by prevailing that it would desist from the demands which it might have made, and so pardon sin without satisfaction; But this is directly contrary to the whole tenor of scripture, which represents him as *giving his life a ransom for many*, Matt. xx. 28. upon which account it is said he *made peace through the blood of his cross*, Col. i. 20. and that *God brought him again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant*, as the *God of peace*, Heb. xiii. 20. and, at the same time, appeared to be a God of infinite holiness and justice, and Christ a Mediator of satisfaction: But this will be farther considered, when we speak concerning his Priestly office †.

That which we shall, at present, observe is, that he is styled the *only* Mediator: Thus it is said, *There is one Mediator between God and men, The man Christ Jesus*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. In this we oppose the Papists, who greatly derogate from the glory of Christ by pretending that the angels, and glorified saints, are mediators of intercession, and that they not only offer up supplications to God in the behalf of men here on earth, but with them they present their own merits, as though Christ's

\* See Page 579. Vol. I.

† See Quest. xlv.

redemption and intercession had not been sufficient without them; and accordingly a great part of their worship consists in desiring that these good offices may be performed by them, on their behalf, which I cannot but conclude to be a breach of the *first*, or, at least, let them put never so fair colours upon it, of the *second commandment*; which will be farther considered in its proper place.

The scriptures they bring, in defence of this practice, are nothing to their purpose. For whenever an angel is said to intercede for men, as it is expressed, *The angel of the Lord answered and said, O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah?* Zech. i. 12. or to be the object of their prayers, or supplications, as Jacob says, *The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads*, Gen. xlviii. 16. no other person is intended hereby but Christ *the angel of the covenant*. Another scripture, which they bring to the same purpose, is that, in which Moses says, *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants*, Exod. xxxii. 13. which they miserably pervert; for Moses does not desire that God would hear the prayers that these saints made to him in the behalf of his church; but that he would remember the covenant that he made with them, and so accomplish the promises thereof, by bestowing the blessings that his people then stood in need of.

And there are two other scriptures that are often cited by the Papists, to this purpose, which, they think, can hardly be taken in any other sense; one is in Rev. v. 8. where it is said, that *the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints*; and the other is in chap. viii. 3. *And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar, which was before the throne*. It must be allowed, that there are many passages, in this book, which are hard to be understood; but there are none contrary to the analogy of faith, or derogatory to the glory of Christ, as the sense they give of these scriptures is; and therefore we must enquire, whether they may not be understood otherwise by us? It is said, indeed, *the four beasts, and four and twenty elders, had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints*; but it is not fully determined whether, by these *beasts and elders*, are intended the inhabitants of heaven, or men on earth. If it is only an emblematical representation of those prayers that are directed to God from the church in this world, it is nothing to their purpose. But we will suppose that, by these *beasts and elders*, here spoken of, who *fell down before the Lamb*, are meant

the inhabitants of heaven : nevertheless, we are not to understand, that they are represented as praying for the saints here on earth ; for *the golden vials full of odours*, are only an emblem of the prayers that are put up by the saints here on earth, which God accepts of, or smells a sweet savour in, as perfumed with odours of Christ's righteousness. This may be illustrated by those political emblems, that are used in public solemnities ; such as the coronation of kings, in which the regalia are carried by the prime ministers of state, not to signify that they have any branch of kingly dignity belonging to them : but the whole ceremony is expressive of his honours and prerogatives, who is the principal subject thereof ; so when the heavenly inhabitants are represented, in this vision, in such a way, as they are here described, it only signifies, that the prayers, which are put up by God's people here on earth, through the mediation of Christ, are graciously heard and answered by him.

As for the other scripture, in which it is said, *Another angel stood at the altar, and there was given him much incense, that he should offer it, with the prayers of all saints*, that is generally understood, by those who do not give into this absurd opinion of the Papists, as spoken of our Saviour, and then it makes nothing to their purpose, but rather militates against it. But if it be objected, to this sense of the text, that our Saviour cannot properly be called *another angel*, and therefore it must be meant of one of the created angels ; the sense but now given of the foregoing scripture may be accommodated to it, and so the meaning is, this angel, or one of the angels, *stood at the altar before the Lamb*, and, in an emblematical way, is set forth, as having incense put into his hand, which he presents to him ; not as offering it up for himself, but as signifying that it was for the sake of Christ's merits, that the prayers of his people, here on earth, ascended with acceptance in the sight of God. And it is as though he should say to Christ, " The incense is thine, " thou hast a right to the glory thereof ; and therefore let all " know, that this is the only foundation of the church's hope, " that their wants shall be supplied by thee." So that this does not give the least countenance to the Popish doctrine, of there being other mediators between God and man besides our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of the Papists, indeed, are sensible that this opinion tends to detract from the glory of our great Mediator, and therefore they chuse rather to assert, that the saints and angels are mediators between Christ and men, so that we are through their means, to have access to him, and by him, to the Father : but, since Christ not only condescended to take our nature upon him, and therein to procure redemption for us ; but invited his people to *come to him* ; and since it is said, *through*



him we have an access unto the Father, Eph. ii. 18. and no mention is made of any, by whom we have access to Christ ; and our access to God is founded only in his blood, we have nothing else to do, but, by faith, in what he has done and suffered to draw nigh to God, as to a Father, reconciled to this great and only Mediator.

II. This Mediator is described, as to his Person, as God incarnate, or, as it is expressed, the eternal Son of God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, who became Man, and that, in the most proper sense, by assuming to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, which are the two constituent parts of man. Here we are to consider,

1. The Person assuming the human nature. He is styled the eternal Son of God, of one substance with the Father, and, with respect to his personality, equal with him.\* This is the same mode of speaking that was used by the *Nicene fathers*, in defence of our Saviour's divinity against the Arians, which we have largely insisted on, in our defence of the *doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity*,† and having also explained what we mean by Christ's Sonship, as referring to his Person and character, as Mediator,‡ we shall add no more on that subject at present, but take it for granted, that our Saviour is, in the most proper sense, a divine Person, and shall consider him as assuming the human nature ; accordingly we may observe,

(1.) That it was the second Person in the Godhead who was incarnate, and not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost. This we affirm against the Sabellians, who deny the distinct Personality of the Father, Son, and Spirit ; and assert that the Father, or the Holy Ghost, might as truly be said to have been incarnate, as the Son, since their Personality, according to them, is not so distinct, as that what is done by one divine Person, might not be said to have been done by another.§

(2.) It follows, from hence, that the divine nature, which belongs in common to the Father, Son, and Spirit, cannot be properly said to have been incarnate. It is true, we read, that *God was manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and elsewhere, that *in him*, namely, in the human nature, *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead*, Col. ii. 9. from whence some take occasion to conclude, that the human nature was united to the Godhead, or that the Godhead of Christ was said to be incarnate : but if this be asserted, it must be with caution and a distinction. I cannot therefore suppose, that the Godhead absolutely considered, but as including in it the idea of its subsisting in the Person of the Son, was incarnate ; which is very well ex-

\* See Vol. I. Page 243.

† See Quest. ix, x, xi.

‡ Vide. the note, Vol. I. Page 279.

§ For this reason, the Sabellians are often called, by ancient writers, *Patrispassians*

pressed, when we say that the human nature was united to the second Person in the Godhead, rather than to the Godhead itself.

(3.) Christ being farther considered, as the eternal Son of God; it follows from hence, that he existed before his incarnation, which has been largely insisted on, under a foregoing answer, in defence of Christ's proper deity. In this we oppose not only the Socinians, who deny that he existed before he was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin; but also the Arians, especially those of them who take occasion to explain, without disguise, or ambiguity of words, what they mean when they speak of him, as being before time, which comes infinitely short of what is intended by his being styled God's eternal Son, and so existing with him before time. Thus we have an account of the Person assuming the human nature.

2. We are now to consider the nature assumed, or united to the divine Person, which was an human nature, consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul; so that as Christ is, in one nature, God equal with the Father, in the other he is Man, made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us. Here we may consider,

(1.) That, since this is a matter of pure revelation, we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to assert, that our Saviour is both God and Man. Many of the scriptures, that have been before referred to, to prove his deity, expressly attribute to him an human, as well as a divine nature, and speak of the same Person as both God and Man; as when God styles him, *The Man that is my Fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7. or, when he, who is *Jehovah*, our righteousness, is also described as *a branch raised unto David*, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. that is, of the seed of David; or, as the apostle says, he, *who is over all, God blessed for ever, was of the fathers concerning the flesh*, or his human nature, Rom. ix. 15. Moreover, when we read of the same Person, as styled, *The mighty God*, and yet *a Child born unto us*, a *Son given*, Isa. ix. 6. or of the same Person's being called *Emmanuel*, *God with us*, and yet *born of a Virgin*, Isa. vii. 14. compared with Matt. i. 23. or, when we read of the *Word's being made flesh*, and *dwelling among us*: and elsewhere, being called *the Son of God*, *Jesus Christ our Lord*, and yet *made of the seed of David, according to the flesh*, Rom. i. 3. or, *God manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. These, and many other scriptures, as plainly prove him to be man, as they do that he is God.\* And, indeed, the arguments to prove his humanity, taken from

\* See the same scriptures, and others to the like purpose, before cited, for the proof of Christ's proper deity, under *Quest. ix. x. xi. Vol. I. Page 302, to 319.* and also what has been said concerning his Sonship, as implying him to be God-man, *Mediator. Vol. I. Page 274. 279, &c.*

thence, are not so much contested, as those that respect his proper deity ; and therefore, if these scriptures prove him to be God, they contain as strong and conclusive arguments to prove him to be Man, so that the bare mention of them is sufficient, especially when we consider, as it cannot be denied, that all these scriptures speak of the same Person ; therefore,

(2.) When Christ is said to be both God and Man, it does not imply that there are two Persons in the Mediator ; and accordingly it is said, in the answer we are explaining, that though these natures are distinct, yet the Person who has them, is but one. This is to be maintained against those who entertain favourable thoughts of that ancient heresy, first broached by Nestorius,\* whose method of reasoning cannot be reconciled with the sense of those scriptures, which plainly speak of the same Person, as both God and Man, and attribute the same actions to him in different respects, which is inconsistent with asserting, that the Mediator is both a divine and a human Person ; and it cannot be denied but that it is a contradiction in terms, to say, that two Persons can be so united, as to become one. However, it must be acknowledged, that this is one of the incomprehensible mysteries of our religion ; and when divines have attempted to explain some things relating to it, they have only given farther conviction, that there are some doctrines contained in scripture, which we are bound to believe, but are at a loss to determine how they are what they are asserted to be.

If it be objected, that we cannot conceive of an human nature, such an one as our Saviour's is that has not its own Personality, since there is no parallel instance hereof, in any other men, which I take to be the principal thing that gave occasion to the asserting, that he had a human Person, as well as a divine ;

The answer that I would give to this objection, is, that though, it is true, every man has a distinct subsistence of his own, without being united to any other person, yet we have no ground to conclude, that the human nature of Christ, even in its first formation, had any subsistence separate from the divine nature. Had it been first formed, and then united to the divine nature, it would have had a proper subsistence of its own ; but, since it was not, its Personality, considered as united to the second Person in the Godhead, is contained therein, though its properties are infinitely distinct from it.

3. These two natures are distinct ; united but not confounded. This is asserted, in opposition to an old exploded heresy,

\* Nestorius was Bishop of Constantinople, in the reign of Theodosius, the younger, A. D. 428. who very warmly maintained, that the Virgin Mary was not the mother of that Person that was God, but of a distinct human Person, called Christ, which was censured and condemned by the council at Ephesus, A. D. 431.



which was maintained by some, who, to avoid the error of Nestorius, and his followers, went into the other extreme,\* and asserted, that the divine and human nature of Christ were confounded, or blended together, after the similitude of things that are mixed together in a natural or artificial way, whereby the composition is of a different nature from the parts of which it is compounded, by which means they debase his Godhead, and advance his manhood; or rather, instead of supposing him to be both God and man, they do, in effect, say, he is neither God nor man. The main foundation, as I apprehend, of this absurd and blasphemous notion, was, that they could not conceive how he could have a divine and human understanding and will, without asserting, with Nestorius, that there were two persons in the Mediator, whereby they split against one rock, while endeavouring to avoid another. And to fence against both extremes, the fathers, in the council of Chalcedon, explained the doctrine in words to this purpose: That the two natures of Christ were indivisibly and inseparably united, without supposing that one was changed into the other, or confounded with it.

Therefore we must consider, that though these two natures are united, yet each of them retains its respective properties, as much as the soul and body of man do, though united together, which is the best similitude by which this can be illustrated, though I do not suppose that, in all respects, it answers it. Thus, in one nature, Christ had all the fulness of the Godhead, and in nothing common with us; nothing finite, derived, or dependent, or any other way defective. In his other nature, he was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted: in this nature, he was born in time, and did not exist from all eternity, and increased in knowledge, and other endowments, proper thereunto. In one nature, he had a comprehensive knowledge of all things; in the other, he knew nothing but by communication, or derivation, and with those other limitations that finite wisdom is subject to. In one nature he had an infinite sovereign will; in the other, he had such a will as the creature has, which though it was not opposite to his divine will, yet its conformity thereunto was of the same kind with that which is in perfect creatures; so that though we do not say that his human will was the same with his divine, as to the essential properties thereof; yet it may be said to be the same, in a moral sense, as conformed thereunto, in like manner, as the will of man is said to be subjected to the will of God.

\* These are called Eutychians, from Eutyches, an abbot of Constantinople, who, when he had gained a great deal of reputation, in disputing against Nestorius, in the council at Ephesus, a few years after, viz. A. D. 448. propagated his opinion, which was condemned, as heretical, in the council at Chalcedon, A. D. 451.

Had this been duly considered, persons would not have been so ready to give into an error so dangerous and blasphemous, as that which we are opposing. And we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to distinguish between his divine and human understanding and will, inasmuch as it is said, in one place, speaking of his divine understanding, *Lord, thou knowest all things*, John xxi. 17. and of his human, *Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the Son*, Mark xiii. 32. and so of his will, it is sometimes represented as truly divine, in the same sense as the Father's, as when it is said, *As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*, John v. 21. and elsewhere, *If we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us*, 1 John v. 14. and, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37. And, in other places, he is represented as having an human will, essentially distinct from the will of God; as when he says, *Not my will, but thine, be done*, Luke xxii. 42.

4. The nature that was assumed by the Son of God, is farther described, as truly and properly human. It was not an angelic nature; as the apostle says, *He took not on him the nature of angels*, inasmuch as he did not design to redeem the angels that fell, but he *took on him the nature of the seed of Abraham*, Heb. ii. 16. And, this nature is farther described, as consisting of a true body, and a reasonable soul.

(1.) Christ is described as having a true body. This is maintained against those who, in an early age of the church,\* denied that he had a real human nature. These, it is true, do not deny his deity; but they suppose, that it was impossible for God to be united to human flesh, and therefore that he appeared only in the likeness thereof; as some heathen writers represent their gods, as appearing in human forms, that they might converse with men. Thus they suppose, that the Godhead of Christ appeared in an human form, without a real human nature, in which sense they understand that scripture, *He took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men*, Phil. ii. 7. as though, in that place, the similitude of a man were opposed to real humanity; or, at least, they suppose, that he had no other human nature when he dwelt on earth, than what he had, when he appeared to the church, under the Old Testament-dispensation, viz. to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and several others, in which they conclude, that there was only the likeness of a human body, or an aerial one, which, according to some common modes of speaking, is called a spirit. To give countenance to this, they bring some other scriptures, as when it is said, after his resurrection, that *he appeared in ano-*

\* This absurd opinion, subversive of Christianity, was propagated by several among the Gnosticks, in the second century, who, for this reason, were called *Docetæ*.

ther form to two disciples, as they walked into the country, Mark xvi. 12. so when he appeared to Mary, it was in such a form, as that she knew not that it was Jesus, but supposed him to be the gardener, John xx. 14, 15. and especially when it is said, in another scripture, Luke xxiv. 21. when his two disciples at Emmaus knew him, he vanished out of their sight;\* which they understand of his vanishing, in the same sense, as, according to the popular way of speaking, a spectrum is said to do.

But this opinion is so absurd, as well as contrary to scripture, that it only shews how far the wild and extravagant fancies of men may run, who are so hardy, as to set aside plain scriptures, and take up with some few passages thereof, without considering their scope and design, or their harmony with other scriptures. And, indeed, there is scarce any thing said concerning him in the New Testament, but what confutes it; where we have an account of him, as being born, passing through all the ages of life, conversing familiarly with his people, eating and drinking with them, and, at last, dying on the cross, which put this matter out of all manner of dispute; as also when he distinguishes himself from a spirit, when the disciples were terrified upon his standing unexpectedly in the midst of them, supposing that he had been a spirit, he satisfies them that they were mistaken, by saying, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have*, Luke xxiv. 29.

As for those scriptures in the Old Testament, which speak of his appearing in a human form, assumed for that purpose; whether there was, in every one of those instances, a real human body that appeared, though, in some of them, it is beyond dispute that there was, I will not pretend to determine; yet it must be considered, that this is never styled his incarnation, or becoming man, but it was only an emblem, or prelibation thereof; and when it is said, in the scripture before mentioned, that he was made *in the likeness of men*, it does not from hence follow, that he was not, after his incarnation, a real man, for the *likeness of man* is oftentimes so understood in scripture; as when it is said, on occasion of the birth of Seth, that *Adam begat a son in his own likeness*, Gen. v. 3. And as to that other scripture, in which Christ is said to appear in different forms, it is not to be supposed that there was a change in his human nature, but only a change in his countenance, or external mein; or he appeared with other kind of garments, which rendered him not immediately known by them. And when, in the other scripture, it is said, he *vanished out of their sight*, nothing is intended thereby, but an instantaneous withdrawing of himself from them, which, it may be might contain something miraculous.

\* αὐτοῦ; ὁμοῖον.



(2.) Christ is farther described, as having taken to himself a reasonable soul, to which his body was united. This is maintained against the Arians, who deny that he had an human soul, concluding that the divine nature, such an one as they will allow him to have, was, as it were, a soul to his body; which is founded partly on their misunderstanding the sense of those scriptures, in which it is said, *The Word was made flesh*, John i. 14. and *God was manifest in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. and, *Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same*, Heb. ii. 14. and, *Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came*, &c. Rom. ix. 5. But the principal argument, by which this opinion is supported, is, because they suppose, that, if he had an human soul, distinct from his divine nature, he must have had two understandings and wills, to wit, a divine and an human, and then it would have been possible for him to have had contrary ideas in his mind, and determinations in his will, as man, to what he had as God, which would infer a sort of confusion of thought, and irregularity of actions: but to this it may be answered,

1st, As to the former, relating to his assuming flesh, it is a very common thing, in scripture, by a *synecdoche*, of the part for the whole, for *flesh* to signify the whole man, consisting of soul and body, of which we have many instances in scripture; as when it is said, *All flesh had corrupted his way*, Gen. vi. 12. that is, all men had corrupted their way; and the prophet speaking concerning the vanity of man, as mortal, says, *All flesh is grass*, Isa. xl. 6.

2dly, As to the other branch of their argument; we allow that Christ, as Man, had a distinct understanding and will, from what he had as God, and that his human understanding was not equally perfect with his divine, neither had his human will the sovereignty and glory of his divine will. And, if it should be also allowed, that if his human understanding and will had not always been under the influence and direction of his divine, he might have had contrary ideas, and determinations, as man, to what he had as God; yet we cannot allow that the divine nature would so far suspend its direction and influence, as that his human understanding should have contradictory ideas to his divine, so that this inconvenience should ensue, which would occasion a confusion and disorder in his actions, or methods of human conduct. It was no disparagement to him, nor hindrance to his work, to suppose that his human soul was subject to some natural imperfections, which were inconsistent with the infinite perfection of his deity; however, it is sufficient to assert, that, as Man, he knew every thing, which he was obliged to perform, in a way of obedience, and consented to, and delighted in every thing that was agreeable to his divine will, which would render his obedience compleat; though we sup-

pose, that the nature, in which he performed it, was less perfect than that to which it was united ; therefore this method of reasoning is not conclusive, and we must suppose, that he had a human soul, distinct from his divine nature. This is evident, because he could not perform obedience in the divine nature, his human soul being the only subject thereof, and it is proper to the deity to be dispassionate ; therefore those sinless passions which he was subject to, were seated in his soul, as united to the body ; and that he had such passions, is very plain from scripture ; for he says, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, Matt. xxvi. 38. And there are various other passions besides sorrow, which he was subject to, which, though free from sin, were altogether inconsistent with the infinite perfection of the divine nature.

9. This human nature is said to have been conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin. Here we may observe,

(2.) That there was something in the formation of Christ's human nature, in which he resembled the rest of mankind, in that he was not produced, and brought into a state of manhood in an instant, or created out of the dust of the ground, as Adam was, but was born, or as the apostle expresses it, *made of a woman*, Gal. iv. 4. to denote his being formed out of her substance ; and accordingly he began his state of humiliation in infancy, that he might, in all respects, be made like unto those whom he came to redeem. Herein the promise made to our first parents, relating to his being *the seed of the woman*, Gen. iii. 15. was not only fulfilled ; but another express prediction, by the prophet Isaiah, who says, *Unto us a Child is born*, Isa. ix. 6.

(2.) There was something peculiar and extraordinary in his formation, as he was an extraordinary Person, and to be engaged in a work peculiar to himself ; so he is said to have been born of a Virgin, not because, as some suppose, that that is a state of greater sanctity, than any other condition of life, but, as was before observed \*, that he might be exempted from the guilt of Adam's first sin, which he would have been liable to, though sanctified from the womb, had his human nature been formed in an ordinary way. It was certainly necessary that his human nature, which was, in its first formation, united to his divine Person, should be perfectly sinless ; since it would have been a reproach cast on the Son of God, to have it said concerning him, that he was, in the nature which he assumed, estranged to, and separate from God, as all mankind are, who are born in an ordinary way. And this was also necessary for his accomplishing the work of our redemption, since as the apostle says, *Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harm-*

\* See Page 112. ante.

*less, undefiled, and separate from sinners*, Heb. vii. 26. And, in order to his being born of a Virgin, there was an extraordinary instance of the power of God; and therefore it is said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*, Luke i. 35.

His being born of a Virgin, was an accomplishment of that prediction which we read of in Isa. vii. 14. *The Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel*. This text being so convincing a proof of Christianity, and, as such, referred to in the New Testament, Matt. i. 22, 23. the Jews, and many of the modern Deists, have endeavoured to weaken the force thereof, which renders it necessary for us to illustrate and explain it, agreeably to the scope and design of the prophecy, contained in the context; which we shall endeavour to do, in the following Paraphrase. Says God to the prophet, “Go to Ahaz, “and bid him not be faint-hearted, by reason of the threatened “invasion by the confederate kings of Israel and Syria; but let “him ask a sign for the confirmation of his faith, that I may “hereby assure him, that they shall not be able to do him any “hurt: but I know, before-hand, his unbelief, and the sullen- “ness of his temper, that he will refuse to ask a sign; there- “fore, when thou goest to meet him, take thy young son Shear- “jashub in thine hand, or in thine arms, from whom thou may- “est take occasion to deliver part of the message which I send “thee with to him; tell him, that though he refuse to ask a sign, “nevertheless \*, *the Lord shall give thee a sign*, to his people, “whom thou shalt command to hear this message, as well as “Ahaz, they being equally concerned herein; therefore let them “know, that, though their obstinate and wicked king calls a com- “pliance with my command a *tempting* me, and therefore will “not ask a sign, I will not give him any other sign, than what “the whole house of Israel shall behold, in future ages, which, “though it cannot be properly called a prognostic sign, yet it “will be, when it comes to pass, a *rememorative sign* †, and that “shall be a glorious one; for, *Behold a Virgin ‡ shall conceive*,

\* So the Hebrew word ought to be rendered, rather than therefore; for so it is understood in other scriptures, particularly in Jer. xxx. 16.

† This is a just distinction relating to signs mentioned in scripture; in which, sometimes a sign did not take place till the thing signified, or brought to remembrance thereby, had been accomplished. See Exod. iii. 12. 1 Sam. ii. 34. Isa. xxxvii. 30. Jer. xlv. 29, 30. as Bishop Kidder well observes. See *Demonstrat. of the Messias*, Part II. page 105, in Fol.

‡ The Hebrew word עַלְמָה is truly rendered a Virgin, as it is translated by the LXX. [*παρθένος*] who well understand the sense of it, in this and other places, where we meet with it; as also doth the Chaldee Paraphrast thus understand it, and the Syriac, Arabic, and vulgar Latin versions: and this sense agrees with the grammatical construction of the word, which is derived from עָלַם *abscondit*, and it alludes to the custom used among the Jews of keeping their virgins concealed till they



and bear a Son, and thou shalt call his name Immanuel. When this wonderful thing happens, a thing new and unheard of, which shall be created in the earth, that a woman should compass a man, as it is said elsewhere, Jer. xxxi. 22. then the house of David shall understand the reason why I have not suffered these two kings to destroy Judah, so that it should be broken, that it be not a people, as Ephraim shall, within threescore and five years, [ver. 8.] for then the Messiah could not come of the house of David; and what he shall do for them, when he comes, is the ground and reason of all the temporal deliverances that I work for them, and particularly of this from the intended invasion of these two confederate kings. Tell them, moreover, that as this shall be a rememorative sign, so I will give them to understand, at present, that they shall be delivered in a little time; for before this Child, which thou hast here brought with thee, shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, or shall know the difference between moral good and evil, that is, in two or three years time, The land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings; or those two kings, which thou darest, shall be driven, by the king of Assyria, out of their own land. And inasmuch as my people may be afraid, that, before these two years are expired, they shall be brought into such straights, through famine, or scarcity of provisions, which generally attend sieges, that they shall want the necessaries of life; let them know that this child, meaning Shear-jashub, shall not want butter and honey, that is, the best and most proper food for it, that he may know, or rather, until \* he know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, that is, till these two kings, Rezin and Pekah, be utterly destroyed."

Thus having considered our Saviour's being born of a Virgin, there is one thing more that is to be observed under this head, namely, that he was of her substance, which is particularly mentioned in this answer, with a design to fence against an

were married; therefore as a learned writer well observes, עלמה Notat statum societarium domi delitescendum ideoque; calicibus & virginum; and in those two places, in which it is objected by the Jews, that the word does not signify a virgin, but a young woman, namely, Prov. xxx. 19 and Cant. vi. 8. In the former, as one observes, Promptissimum est intelligere vincula amoris quibus virgo incipit adstringi futuro sponso suo; and therefore it may be understood of a virgin, in the literal sense of the word. Vid. Conc. Lexic. in Voc. The LXX. indeed, render it, ἀνδρὸς ἢ νεότητι, and the vulgar Latin version, Viri in adolescentia; but the Chaldee Paraphrast renders it, Viri in virgine. And as for the later scripture, in which it is said, there are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, it is plain, the word virgins is not opposed to young women, for such were many of them that are called queens and concubines, but to persons deflowered; therefore we may conclude, that the word always signifies a virgin, and therefore is rightly translated in the text, under our present consideration.

\* So the word is properly rendered by the Chaldee Paraphrast.

ancient heresy, maintained by the Gnostics in the second century, and hath been defended by others, in later ages, who supposed, that our Saviour did not derive his human nature from the Virgin Mary, but that it was formed in heaven, and sent down from thence; and that the Virgin's womb is only to be considered as the first seat of its residence in this lower world, which they found on those scriptures which speak of *his coming down from heaven*, John iii. 13, 14. which they understand concerning his human nature; whereas, nothing is intended thereby but the manifestative presence of his divine nature, in which respect God is, in other scriptures, said to *come down* into this lower world, Gen. xi. 5, 7. And another scripture, which they bring to the same purpose, is that, in which, they suppose, he denies his relation to his mother, when he says, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*, Mat. xi. 48. 50. in which he does not deny his natural relation to them, but designs to shew, that his regard to persons in the exercise of his public ministry, was principally founded on their doing the will of his Father. And whereas they farther suppose, that if his human nature had, in any respect, been derived from the substance of the Virgin, either she must be concluded immaculate, as the Papists do, or else he must have been born a sinner; this hath been already proved to be no just consequence, inasmuch as the formation of his human nature, though it were of the substance of the Virgin, was in an extraordinary and miraculous way, whereby he was exempted from the guilt of original sin.

There is another opinion maintained by some of the schoolmen, which, though it be not generally received, seems, to me, not altogether improbable, namely, that Christ's human body, though formed in the womb of the virgin, and a part of her substance, yet, as to the manner of its formation, it differed from that of all other human bodies, inasmuch as the matter, of which they consist, receives its form in a gradual way, and they cannot properly speaking be styled human bodies, till organized and fitted to have their souls united to them; whereas these suppose that the body of Christ, in its first formation, was rendered fit to receive the soul, which was, in an instant united to it; and both soul and body, at the same time, without having any separate subsistence, were united to the divine nature. This account of the formation of Christ's human body, though I think it most adapted to the union of his soul and body with the divine nature, in the very instant of its formation, and therefore cannot but conclude it a more probable conjecture than what is generally received, yet I do not lay it down as a necessary article of faith; nor would I, from hence, be supposed to deny

that the body of Christ grew in the womb like other human bodies, after the soul is united to them; nor would I set aside the account the scripture gives of the virgin's *accomplishing* the full number of *days, in which she should be delivered*, Luke ii. 6. Gal. iv. 4. Thus we have considered our Saviour, as having a true body and a reasonable soul, and both united to the divine nature, whereby he is denominated God incarnate, in this answer.

6. Our Mediator is farther said to have been incarnate, in the fulness of time; and it is added, he shall continue to be both God and man for ever.

(1.) Let us consider what is meant by Christ's becoming man in the fulness of time. The human nature could not be united to the divine from all eternity; since it is inconsistent with its being a created nature, that it should exist from eternity; notwithstanding he might, had it been so determined, have assumed this nature in the beginning of time, or immediately after the fall of man, who then stood in need of a Mediator; but God, in his sovereign and wise providence, ordered it otherwise, namely, that there should be a considerable distance of time between the fall of man and Christ's incarnation, in order to his recovery, which is called, in scripture, the *fulness of time*, Gal. iv. 4. that is, the time foretold by the prophets, and particularly Daniel, Dan. ix. 24, 25. whose prediction had an additional circumstance of time annexed to it, which gave occasion to the Jews to expect his coming at the same time that he was incarnate.

That there was an universal expectation of the Messiah at this time, appears from the disposition of many among them to adhere to any one, especially if he pretended himself to be a prophet, or that he would make some change in their civil affairs; and the Jewish historian \* tells us of many tumults and seditions that were in that age. Some of their ring-leaders he styles magicians; and persons pretending to be prophets, though, indeed, he does not expressly say that they assume the character of Messiah, yet he observes, that the time in which this was done, gave occasion hereunto †; by which he means that it being at that time that the Jews expected that the Messiah, their king, should come, they thought it a fit opportunity to make these efforts, to shake off the Roman yoke; and they were so far from concealing the expectation they had thereof, that it was well known by the heathen, who were not without jealousies concerning them, with respect to this matter; so that some celebrated writers among them observe, that it was generally

\* See Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. 1 & Lib. XX. cap. 2. & de Bell. Jud. Lib. II. cap. 6.

† Βασιλευς ελπιος, αντιστοι.



received throughout the east, according to some ancient predictions, that, at that time, the Jews should obtain the empire ; \* and there are several expressions, in scripture, which intimate as much : thus Gamaliel speaks of one Theudas, who *boasted himself to be somebody*, by which, it is probable, he means the Messiah, *to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, and were slain*, Acts v. 36, 37. which some think to be the same person that Josephus mentions, the name being the same ; though others are rather inclined to think that it was another pretender to this character, from some critical remarks they make on the circumstance of time referred to by Gamaliel, being different from that which is mentioned by Josephus. † However, this does not affect our argument ; for it is plain, from hence, that, about that time, the Jews were disposed to join themselves to any one who endeavoured to persuade them that he was the Messiah.

And this farther appears, from what our Saviour says, *All that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers*, John x. 8. by which, doubtless, he means, several that pretended to be the Messiah, in that age, before he came ; and it is said elsewhere, Luke xix. 11. a little before our Saviour's crucifixion, that *they*, that is, the Jews, generally *thought that the kingdom of God, and consequently the Messiah, whom they expected, should immediately appear* ; and he also foretels, that between this and the destruction of Jerusalem, that is, before that age was at an end, *many false Christs, should arise*, and warns his followers not to adhere to them, Mat. xxiv. 24—26.

Moreover, had not the Jews expected that the Messiah would appear at that time, they would never have sent in so formal a manner, as they are said to have done, to enquire, *Whether John the Baptist, when he exercised his public ministry amongst them, was he ?* John i. 19—21. And, when he had convinced them that he was not the Messiah, but that our Saviour would soon appear publicly amongst them, who had the only right to this character, he found it no difficult matter to persuade them to believe it ; and accordingly Jerusalem and all Judea, that is, the people almost universally attended on his ministry, and were baptized, making a profession of this faith, and of their expectation of, and willingness to adhere to him ; and it was the report, that the wise men, who came from the east, had received from the Jews, who were conversant with them, that this was the time that the Messiah should appear, that brought them to

\* Vid. Sueton in Vespas. *Percrebuerat oriente toto, ventus Et constans opinio, esse in fatis ; ut eo tempore Judea, profecti, rerum potirentur ; Et Tacit. Histor. Lib. V. Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut rulesceret, Oriens, profectiq ; Judea rerum potirentur.*

† See Lightfoot's works, Vol. I. Pag. 763, 766.

Jerusalem, from their respective countries, otherwise that preternatural meteor, or star, which they saw, could not have given them a sufficient intimation concerning this matter, so as to induce them to come and pay their homage to him; and when they came, and enquired of Herod, *Where is he that is born king of the Jews?* how surprizing soever it might be to that proud tyrant, to think that there was one born, who, as he supposed, would stand in competition with him for the crown, yet it was no unexpected thing to the Sanhedrim, whose opinion in this matter he demanded, in an hypocritical manner; therefore they say, he was *to be born in Bethlehem*, according to the prediction of the prophet Micah; whereas, if they had not known that this was the time in which he was to be born, they would have replied, that it was an unseasonable question, and a vain thing, to ask where a person was to be born, whose birth was not expected in that age; and they might easily have satisfied Herod, and removed the foundation of his jealousy and trouble, and thereby have prevented that inhuman barbarity committed on the infants of Bethlehem, if they had told him that the time spoken of by the prophet Daniel, in which the Messiah was to be born, was not yet come: but they knew otherwise; and in this respect, Christ might be said to be born *in the fulness of time*. That which we shall farther observe, concerning it, is,

1st, That it was at that time when God had sufficiently tried the faith of the Old Testament-church, in waiting for his coming, and thereby glorified his sovereignty, who hath the times and seasons of his bestowing all blessings in his own power.

2dly, It was at that time when the measure of the iniquity of the world was abundantly filled, whereby his people might observe the deplorable state into which sin had brought mankind, and the utter impossibility of our recovery without a Mediator, and that the light of nature could not discover any method by which the redemption and salvation of man might be brought about.

3dly, It was at that time that the Jewish church was at the lowest ebb, and therefore the most seasonable time, and they were laid under the highest obligations to adore and magnify him: their political state was broken, the sceptre departed from Judah, and they were brought under the Roman yoke, which sat very uneasy upon them; neither could they ever expect to make that figure in the world as they once had done, therefore now was the time for the Messiah to come, and erect his kingdom. And, besides this, they were given up to a very great degree of judicial blindness and hardness, and were disposed to make void the law of God by their traditions; so that religion, among them, was at a very low ebb; therefore it was the

fittest time for God to display his grace, in reviving his work, and preventing his cause and interest from wholly sinking in the world. This was the time in which the Son of God became Man.

(2.) Christ shall continue to be God and Man for ever, or the union of these two natures is indissoluble: as to his divine nature, he is necessarily eternal and unchangeable; and the human nature shall continue for ever united to it, as the result of the divine purpose, in which God intends that some ends, glorious to himself, honourable to the Mediator, and advantageous to his people, should be attained thereby. For,

1st, If he had had a design to lay aside his human nature, he would have done it when he finished his work of obedience and sufferings therein, and thereby had so far answered the end of his incarnation, that nothing more was necessary for the purchase of redemption: but when he rose from the dead, as a Conqueror over death and hell, and was declared to have accomplished the work he came into the world about, it is certain he did not lay it aside, but ascended visibly into heaven, and shall come again, in a visible manner, in that same nature, to judge the world at the last day.

2dly, The eternity of Christ's human nature appears from the eternity of his mediatorial kingdom, of which more under a following answer, when we come to speak concerning the glory of Christ's kingly office. It appears also, from the eternity of his intercession, which, as the apostle expresses it, *He ever liveth to make*, Heb. vii. 25. for his people: thus he does, by appearing in the human nature in the presence of God, in their behalf; therefore he must for ever have an human nature.

3dly, His saints shall abide for ever in heaven, and, as the apostle says, *Shall ever be with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 17. and their happiness shall continue both as to soul and body; and, with respect to their bodies, it is said, they shall be *fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*, Phil. iii. 21. therefore his glorious body, or his human nature, shall continue for ever united to his divine Person.

4thly, His retaining his human nature for ever, seems necessary, as it redounds to the glory of God: it is an eternal monument of his love to mankind, and an external means to draw forth their love to him, who procured those mansions of glory, which they shall for ever be possessed of, by what he did and suffered for them therein.



**QUEST. XXXVIII.** *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?*

**ANSW.** It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death, give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and so satisfy God's justice, procure his favour, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

**QUEST. XXXIX.** *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be Man?*

**ANSW.** It was requisite that the Mediator should be Man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer, and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

**QUEST. XL.** *Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and Man in one Person?*

**ANSW.** It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and Man, should himself be both God and Man, and this in one Person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole Person.

**O**UR Mediator having been considered as God and Man, in one person, we have a farther account of the necessity of being so. And,

**I.** It was necessary that he should be a divine Person, for several reasons here assigned, with others that may be added. As,

1. If he had not been God, he could not have come into the world, or been incarnate, and have had the guilt of our sins laid on him, with his own consent; for he could not have been a party in the everlasting covenant, in which this matter was stipulated between the Father and him; and, had he not consented to be charged with the guilt of our sin, he could not have been punished for it, inasmuch as God cannot punish an innocent person; and, if such an one be charged with this guilt, and consequently rendered the object of vindictive justice, as our Saviour is said to have been, in scripture, it must be with his own consent. Now the human nature could not consent to its own formation, and therefore it could not consent to bear our iniquities; since to consent supposes the person to be existent, which Christ, had he been only Man, would not have been be-

fore his incarnation, and therefore he could not have come into the world as a Surety for us, and so would not have been fit, in this respect, to have discharged the principal part of the work, which he engaged in as Mediator.

2. There is another thing, mentioned in this answer, which rendered it requisite that the Mediator should be God, namely, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death. It must be allowed, that the weight of the wrath of God, due to our sin, was so great, that no mere creature could, by his own strength, have subsisted under it. We will not deny, that a mere creature, supposing him only innocent, but not united to a divine Person, might have been borne up, under the greatest burthen laid on him, by the extraordinary assistance of God, with whom all things are possible; nor that God's giving a promise that he should not fail, or be discouraged, is such a security, as would effectually keep it from sinking; yet when we consider the human nature, as united to the divine, this is an additional security, that he should not sink under the infinite weight of the wrath of God, that lay upon him; for then it would have been said, that he, who is a divine Person, miscarried in an important work, which he undertook to perform in his human nature, which would have been a dishonour to him: so far this argument hath its proper force. But,

3. There is another reason, which more fully proves the necessity of the Mediator's being a Divine Person, *viz.* that this might give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession, that so what he did might have a tendency to answer the valuable ends designed thereby, namely, the satisfying the justice of God, procuring his favour, and purchasing a peculiar people to himself. Had he been only man, what he did and suffered, might indeed have been sinless, and perfect in its kind; nevertheless, it could not be of infinite value, for a finite creature, as such, cannot pay an infinite price, and thereby answer the demands of justice. Had nothing been demanded of him but a debt of obedience, which he was obliged to perform for himself, as a creature, it would not, indeed, have been necessary that it should be of infinite worth and value, any more than that obedience, that was due from our first parents, while in a state of innocency: But when this is considered as a price of redemption paid for us, and as designed to procure a right to the favour of God, and eternal life, this must be of such a value, that the glory of the justice of God might be secured, which nothing less than an infinite price could do; and the law of God must not only be fulfilled, but magnified, and made honourable; and therefore the obedience, which was required, must not only be sinless, but have in it an infinite

worth and value, that hereby, when in a way of intercession, it is pleaded before God, it might be effectual to answer the ends designed thereby ; but this it could not have been, had he not been an infinite Person, namely, God as well as Man.

4. Another reason assigned for this, is, that he might give his Spirit to his people. It is necessary that redemption should be applied, as well as purchased ; and that the same Person, as a peculiar branch of glory due to him, should perform the one as well as the other ; and, in the application of redemption, it was necessary that the Spirit should be glorified, that hereby he might appear to be a divine Person ; and, as he acts herein in subserviency to the Mediator's glory, as has been before observed \*, he is said to be sent by him, which he could not have been, had not Christ had a divine nature, in which respect he was equal with him ; nor could he be said to give that which the Spirit works, as he promised to do, when he told his disciples, *If I depart, I will send him unto you*, John xvi. 7.

5. It was necessary that Christ should be God, that he might conquer all our enemies, and so remove every thing out of the way that tends to oppose his name, interest, and glory ; these are sin, Satan, the world, and death. Sin, which is opposite to the holiness of God, is that which spirits, excites, and gives being to all opposition there is against him, either in earth or hell, and endeavours to eclipse his glory, controul his sovereignty, and reflect dishonour on all his perfections. This must be subdued by Christ, so that it may no longer have dominion over his people, Rom. vi. 14. and, in order hereunto, its condemning power must be taken away, by his making satisfaction for it, as our great High Priest ; and also its enslaving power subdued by the efficacy of his grace, in the internal work of sanctification.

And, upon his having obtained this victory over sin, Satan is also conquered when his prisoners are brought from under his power ; and he finds himself for ever disappointed, and not able to detain those, who were, at first, led captive by him, nor to defeat the purpose of God relating to the salvation of his elect, or to boast as though he had wrested the sceptre out of his hand, or robbed him of one branch of his glory.

Moreover, the world, which is reckoned among the number of God's enemies, must be conquered inasmuch as it opposes his name and interest in an objective way, from whence corrupt nature takes occasion either to abuse the various gifts and dispensations of providence, or by contracting an intimacy with those who are enemies to God and religion, to become more like them, as the apostle says, *The friendship of the world is*

\* See Vol. 1. Page 291, 292



*enmity with God*, James iv. 4. Now Christ must be God, that he may discover its snares, and enable his people to improve the good things of providence to his glory, and over-rule the evil things thereof for their good.

And as for death, which is reckoned among Christ's and his people's enemies, which the apostle calls, *The last enemy that is to be destroyed*, 1 Cor. xv. 26. this is suffered to detain the bodies of believers, as its prisoners, till Christ's second coming; but it must be destroyed, that so they may be made partakers of complete redemption; and this is also a part of the Mediator's work, as he raises up his people at the last day. And all these victories over sin, Satan, the world, and death, as they require infinite power, so it is necessary that he, who obtains them, should be a divine Person.

6. It is necessary that the Mediator should be God, that he might bring his people to everlasting salvation, that is, first fit them for, lead them in the way to Heaven, and then receive them to it at last; for this reason, he is styled, *The author and Finisher of our Faith*, Heb. xii. 2. and it is said, that as he began the good work, so he performs it, Phil. i. 6. or carries it on to perfection. Grace is Christ's gift and work; as he purchased it by his blood, while on earth; it is necessary that he should apply it by his power; even as Zerubbabel, who was a type of him, after he had laid the foundation-stone of the temple, at last, brought forth the head-stone thereof, with shoutings, crying; *Grace, grace, unto it*, Zech. iv. 7. so Christ works all our works for us, and in us, till he brings them to perfection, and presents his people unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish, Eph. v. 27. and this is certainly a divine work, and consequently he, who performs it, must be a divine Person. And to this we may add,

7. It was necessary that our Mediator should be God, inasmuch as the everlasting happiness of his people consists in the enjoyment of him. He is not only the Author of their complete blessedness, but, as we may express it, the matter of it; they are made happy, not only by him, but in him; accordingly heaven is described as a state, in which they behold his glory, John xvii. 24. and see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. therefore, since he is the Fountain of blessedness, it is requisite that he should be God, as well as Man.

II. It was requisite that the Mediator should be Man. When we speak of the necessity of Christ's incarnation, we are not to understand hereby, that this was absolutely necessary, without supposing the divine will, or purpose, to redeem man; for since our redemption was not in itself necessary, but was only so, as the result of God's purpose relating thereunto; so

Christ's incarnation was necessary, as a means to accomplish it. This is what divines generally call a conditional necessity\*; so that since Christ was ordained to be a Mediator between God and man, it was requisite that he should become Man: The reason assigned for it is, that he might perform obedience to the law. That obedience to the law was required, in order to his making satisfaction for sin, we shall have occasion to consider, when we speak of his Priestly office; therefore all that need be observed under this head, is, that this obedience could not be performed by him in the divine nature, in which respect he cannot be under any obligation to perform that which belongs only to those who are creatures, and as such subjects; therefore, if he be made under the law, he must have a nature fitted and disposed to yield obedience.

Some have enquired, whether it was possible for Christ to have answered this end, by taking any other nature into union with his divine Person; or, whether this might have been brought about by his taking on him the nature of angels? I shall not enter so far into this subject, as to determine whether God might, had he pleased, have accepted of obedience in any other nature, fitted for that purpose; but we have ground, from scripture, to conclude, that this was the only way that God had ordained for the redemption of man; and therefore, though Christ might have performed obedience in some other finite nature, or might have taken the nature of angels, this would not, in all respects, have answered those many great ends, which were designed by his incarnation. And therefore, since this was the way in which God ordained that man should be redeemed, it was necessary that he should take the human nature into union with his divine; and inasmuch as he was to yield obedience to the same law, that we had violated, it was necessary that he should be *made of a woman*, as the apostle expresses it, Gal. iv. 4. God had ordained, as an expedient most conducive for his own glory, that he, who was to be our Redeemer, should run the same race with us; and also, that he should suffer what was due to us, as the consequence of our rebellion against him, that so, as *the Captain of our salvation, he should be made perfect through sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. And inasmuch as sufferings were due to us in our bodies, it was necessary, God having so ordained it, that he should suffer in his body, as well as in his soul; and as death entered into the world by sin, so God ordained it, that we should be redeemed from the power of the grave, by one, who died for us; in which respects, it was necessary that he should be man.

There are also other ends mentioned in this answer, which render this necessary, namely, that he might advance our na-

\* It is otherwise styled, *Necessitas consequentiz*.

ture. It was a very great honour which that particular nature, which he assumed, was advanced unto, in its being taken into union with his divine Person. Though it had no intrinsic dignity, or glory, above what other intelligent, finite, sinless beings are capable of; yet it had a greater relative glory than any other creature had, or can have, which may be illustrated by a similitude taken from the body of man, how mean soever it is in itself, yet, when considered in its relation to the soul, that adds a degree of excellency to it, in a relative sense, greater than what belongs to any creature, destitute of understanding; so the human nature of Christ, though it had not in itself a glory greater than what another finite creature might have been advanced to; yet, when considered as united to the divine nature, its glory, in a relative sense may be said to be infinite.

It follows from hence, that since Christ's being truly and properly man, was a particular instance, in him, of the advancement of our nature, to a greater degree of honour, than what has been conferred on any other creature, this lays the highest obligation on us to admire and adore him; and should be an inducement to us, not to debase that nature which God has, in this respect, delighted to honour, by the commission of those sins, which are the greatest reproach unto it.

Another consequence of Christ's incarnation, whereby it farther appears that it was requisite that he should be man, is that, in our nature, he might make intercession for us. For the understanding of which, let it be considered, that the divine nature cannot properly speaking, be said to make intercession, since this includes in it an act of worship, and argues the Person, who intercedes, to be dependent, and indigent, which is inconsistent with the self-sufficiency and independency of the Godhead; therefore, had he been only God, he could not have made intercession for us, and consequently this is the necessary result of his incarnation.

*Object.* 1. It may be objected hereunto, that *the Spirit* is said to make intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God, Rom. viii. 27. whereas he has no human nature to make intercession in; therefore Christ might have made intercession for us, though he had not been incarnate.

*Ans.* When the Spirit is said to make intercession for us, this is not to be understood of his appearing in the presence of God, and so offering prayers, or supplications to him in our behalf; but it only intends his enabling us to pray for ourselves, which is an effect of his power, working this grace in us; therefore the apostle, speaking concerning the same thing, says, elsewhere, *God hath sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. that is, enabling us to cry, *Abba, Father*: Such an intercession as this, is not



unbecoming a divine Person; and this is what is plainly the sense of those scriptures, in which the Spirit is said to intercede for us. As for Christ's intercession, it consists, indeed, in his praying for us, \* rather than enabling us to pray; therefore it was requisite that he should be Man, in order thereunto.

*Object. 2.* It is generally supposed, that Christ made intercession for his people before his incarnation: Thus we cannot but conclude, that he is intended by *the angel of the Lord*, who is represented as pleading for Israel; *O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and upon the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years?* Zech. i. 12. and also as pleading in their behalf against the accusations of Satan, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord, which hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: Is not this a brand which is plucked out of the fire?* chap. iii. 2. If therefore he made intercession at that time, when he had no human nature, his incarnation was not necessary thereunto.

*Ans.* Though we allow that Christ is often represented, in the Old Testament, as interceding for his people; yet these expressions are either proleptical, and do not denote, so much, what Christ then did, as what he would do, after he had assumed our nature; or they imply, that the salvation of the church, under that dispensation, was owing to the intercession that Christ would make after his incarnation, as well as to that satisfaction which he would give to the justice of God in our nature; so that Christ, in those scriptures, is represented as procuring those blessings for his people, by what he would, in reality, do after his incarnation, the virtue whereof is supposed to be extended to them at that time: He did not therefore *formally*, but *virtually*, intercede for them; and consequently it does not prove that his incarnation was not necessary for his making that intercession, which he ever lives to do in the behalf of his church.

It is farther observed, that it was requisite that our Mediator should be Man, that he might have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities: Thus the apostle says, *He was touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, having been, *in all points*; in his human nature, *tempted like as we are, yet without sin*, Heb. iv. 15. As God, it is true, he has a perfect, namely, a divine knowledge of our infirmities, but not an experimental knowledge thereof; and therefore, in this respect, had he not been Man, he could not have been said to sympathize with us herein; and therefore his compassion towards us, has this additional motive, taken from his incarnation: It was in this respect that he had the passions of the human nature, and thereby is induced,

\* And in presenting his glorious body with the marks of suffering.

from what he once experienced, to help our infirmities, as being such as he himself condescended to bear.

And to this it may be added, as a farther consequence of his incarnation, that we are made partakers of the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness, to the throne of grace. This the apostle also gives us occasion to infer, from his being made of a woman, and made under the law, not only that *he might redeem them that were under the law, but that we might receive the adoption of sons*, Gal. iv. 5. and encourages us, from hence, to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, Heb. iv. 16. As Christ's Sonship, as Mediator, includes his incarnation, and was the ground and reason of the throne of grace being erected, to which we are invited to come; so, he being, in the same respect, constituted Heir of all things, believers who are the sons of God, in a lower sense, are notwithstanding, styled, *Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. He is the Head and Lord of this great family, who purchased an inheritance for them, and they the members thereof, who, in the virtue of his purchase, have a right to it; therefore his incarnation, which was necessary hereunto, was the great foundation of our obtaining the privilege of God's adopted children, and of our access by him to the Father. We first come by faith to him, who, if we allude to Elihu's words, *was formed out of the clay*, and therefore *his terror shall not make us afraid, neither shall his hand be heavy upon us*, Job xxxiii. 6. and through him, we come to God, as our reconciled Father.

III. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God and man, in one Person. Had his human nature been a distinct human Person, the work of our redemption would have been brought about by two persons, which would each of them have had the character of Mediator, unless two persons could be so united, as to constitute but one, which is no better than a contradiction. And it is farther observed, in the answer under our present consideration, that there were works to be performed, proper to each nature: in the human nature he was to perform every thing that implied subjection, obedience, or suffering; and though none of these could be performed by him, in his divine nature, yet an infinite worth, value, and dignity, was to be added thereunto, which was not so much the result of any thing done by him in that nature, as of the union of the human nature with it; upon which account, the obedience he performed, had, in a relative sense, the same value, as though it had been performed in his divine nature; and, upon this account, it is said, that *God purchased the church with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28.

And to this we may add, that as each nature was distinct, and their properties not in the least confounded, as was before observed; so we often read, in scripture, of distinct properties

attributed to the same person, which are opposed to each other, namely, mortality and immortality, weakness and omnipotency, dependence and independence, &c. which could not be, with any propriety of speaking, applied to him, had he not been God and man, in the same person. This is generally styled by divines, *a communication of properties*,\* concerning which we must observe, that the properties of one nature are not predicated of the other; as the Lutherans suppose, when they conclude, that the human nature of Christ is omnipresent, upon which their doctrine of *consubstantiation* is founded; but we assert, that the properties of one nature are predicated of the same person, to whom the other nature also belongs; so that when we say the Person, that was God, obeyed and suffered; or the Person, that was man, paid an infinite price to the justice of God, we are far from asserting, that the Godhead of Christ obeyed, or the manhood merited;† and this is the necessary result of his two natures being united in one Person. There are two things observed, in illustrating this matter.

1. That the works of each nature must be accepted of God for us, as the works of the whole Person, or of the same Person; therefore, if the nature that obeyed and suffered had been an human person, his obedience and sufferings could not have been of infinite value, or accepted by God as a sufficient price of redemption; for they could not have had this value reflected on them, had they not been the works of a divine Person: and those rays of divine glory, that shined forth in his human nature, could have no immediate relation to it, had it been a distinct Person from that of his Godhead.

2. It is farther observed, that those works, which were performed by him in each nature, are to be relied on by us, as the works of the whole Person: this reliance contains in it an instance of adoration, and supposes the Person, who performs them, to be God, which he was not in his human nature; therefore we are to adore our Mediator, and rely on the works performed by him, in his human nature, as he is God and man in one Person. As we have sufficient ground, from scripture to conclude, that the Mediator is the Object of divine adoration; so we are to depend on him, as a divine Person, for salvation; and our worship herein does not terminate on his human nature, but on his deity: but, if his human nature had been a distinct human person we could not be said to adore him that died for us, and rose again; so that, upon all these accounts, it is necessary that he should be not only God and man, but that these two natures should be united in one Person.

\* See Vol. I. page 261.

† This is generally styled, by divines, *Communicatio idiomatum in concreto*, non in abstracto.



Having considered our Mediator as God and man, in one Person, we are now to speak of him as having those glorious titles and characters attributed to him, expressive of his mediatorial work and dignity; accordingly, he is variously denominated as such in scripture: sometimes he is called, *Lord*, Phil. iv. 5. at other times, *Jesus*, Matt. i. 21. and elsewhere, *The Lord Jesus*, Acts ix. 17. and also, *The Lord Christ*, Col. iii. 24. and, in other places, *The Lord Jesus Christ*, chap. i. 2. He is called *Lord*, to denote the infinite dignity of his Person, as God equal with the Father; which name is given him in the New Testament, in the same sense, in which he is called *Jehovah* in the Old, as has been observed under a foregoing answer,\* and to denote his divine sovereignty, as the Governor of the world, and the church, and particularly as executing his kingly office as Mediator; and, in the two following answers, he is described by his mediatorial characters, *Jesus*, and *Christ*.

QUEST. XLI. *Why was our Mediator called Jesus?*

ANSW. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

QUEST. XLII. *Why was our Mediator called Christ?*

ANSW. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure, and so set apart, and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

I. **O**UR Mediator is very often called *Jesus* in the New Testament, which name signifies a *Saviour*, as it is particularly intimated by the angel, who gave direction, that he should be so called, before his birth, Matt. i. 21. and he is not only styled our Saviour, but *our Salvation*, in the abstract: thus the prophet, foretelling his incarnation, says, *Behold, thy Salvation cometh; his reward is with him, and his work before him*, Isa. lxii. 11. and, when Simeon held him in his arms, he blessed God, and said, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, Luke ii. 28—30. He is a Saviour, as he brings about salvation for us, and we attain it by him; and he may be styled our Salvation, as our eternal blessedness consists in the enjoyment of him. Salvation contains in it a preserving and delivering us from all evil, which some call the negative idea thereof, and a conferring on us the greatest good, which is the positive

\* See Vol. I. page 296. 306.

idea of it. In saving us from evil, he is sometimes said to *deliver us from this present evil world*, Gal. i. 4. and elsewhere we are said to *be saved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 9. and, as all the deliverance we experience, or hope for, is included in the word *Salvation*, so are all the spiritual blessings wherewith we are blessed, in this, or a better world; and, upon this account, he, who is the purchaser and author thereof, is called Jesus.

1. Since Christ is called Jesus, let us be exhorted to take heed that we do not entertain any unworthy thoughts of him, or that salvation which he hath procured, by supposing it indefinite, or indeterminate, or that he did not come into the world to save a certain number, who shall eventually obtain this blessing; but that he is the Redeemer, and consequently the Saviour of many that shall finally perish, which is little better than a contradiction. And let us not suppose, that it is in the power of man to make his salvation of none effect; for whatever difficulties there may be in the way, he will certainly overcome them, otherwise he would be called Jesus, or a Saviour to no purpose; and therefore they, who suppose him to be the Saviour of all mankind upon this uncertain condition, that they improve their natural powers, or the liberty of their will, so as to render his purpose, relating to their salvation, effectual, which otherwise it would not be, do not give him the glory which belongs to him, as called Jesus.

2. Let us take heed that we do not extenuate his salvation to our own discouragement, as though he were not able to save, to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, or did not come into the world to save the chief of sinners; or we had certain ground to conclude our case to be so deplorable, as that we are out of the reach of his salvation.

3. Let none presume, without ground, that he is their Saviour, or that they have an interest in him as such, while in an unconverted state; or vainly conclude, that they shall be saved by him, without faith in, or subjection to him.

4. Let this name Jesus tend to excite in us the greatest thankfulness, especially if we have experienced the beginning of the work of salvation; and let such encourage themselves to hope, that having begun the good work in them, he will finish it, when he shall appear, a second time, without sin, unto salvation.

II. Our Mediator is called Christ, or, as it is generally expressed in the Old Testament, the Messiah, which signifies a person anointed: thus it is said, *We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ*, John i. 41. or, as it is in the margin, *the anointed*. And, as anointing was made use of under the ceremonial law, in the public inauguration and in-

vestiture of prophets, priests, and kings, in their respective offices, they are, for that reason, called *God's anointed*: thus it is said, concerning the prophets, *Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm*, Psal. cv. 15. Kings are likewise so styled, as Samuel says, *Surely the Lord's anointed is before him*, 1 Sam. xvi. 6. These were often anointed, though not always; \* but the priests were always anointed, when they first entered on their office; and the high priest is described by this character, as he upon *whose head the anointing oil was poured*; so we read of *the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments*, Psal. cxxxiii. 2. This was not an insignificant ceremony, or merely political, in which respect it is used, in our day, in the inauguration of kings; but it was an ordinance to signify God's designation of them, to the office which they were to execute, in which they were to expect, and depend upon him for those qualifications that were necessary thereunto; but it was more especially designed to typify the solemn inauguration and investiture of our Saviour, in the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King of his church; and, in allusion hereunto, he is called, *the Messiah*, or *the Christ*. His anointing was not external, or visible, with material oil; but, in a spiritual sense, it signified his receiving a commission from the Father to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King: upon which account, he is styled, *God's holy child Jesus, whom he had anointed*, Acts iv. 27. And this unction, as it was of a spiritual nature, so it was attended with greater circumstances of glory; and the offices he was appointed to execute, were more spiritual, extensive, and advantageous, than theirs, who were types thereof: thus the Psalmist says of him, *God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows*, Psal. xlv. 7. accordingly he was anointed to execute his prophetic office, to

\* Prophets were, indeed, oftentimes set apart for that office, without anointing; but it seems probable, from the command of God to Elijah, to anoint Elisha to be a prophet in his room, that when they were called, in an extraordinary manner, to be public prophets, and in that respect, as it is said concerning the prophet Jeremiah, [chap. i. 10.] Set over nations and kingdoms, then they were not only sanctified and ordained hereunto, but the ceremony of anointing was used, especially when some other prophet was appointed to instal them in this office. And as for kings, though they were not always anointed, yet this ceremony was generally used, as is observed by some Jewish writers, when the kingdom was rent out of the hand of one, and another was, by immediate divine direction, substituted to reign in his stead: thus, when the kingdom was taken from Saul, David was anointed; and it was also used in other instances, though the crown was inherited by lineal descent, when any other made pretensions to it. Thus David commanded Salomon to be anointed, because Adonijah pretended to it, [1 Kings i. 34.] And Joash was anointed, though he had a right to the crown, as descended from Ahaziah, who was king before him, because the crown had, for some time, been usurped by Athaliah, [2 Kings xi. 12.] In these, and such like cases, kings were installed in their office by unction, though, in other instances, it was not universally practised.



*preach the gospel to the poor*, Luke iv. 18. and his priestly, so the prophet Daniel speaks of him, as *finishing transgression, making an end of sin, bringing in an everlasting righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. which he did as a Priest; and then he speaks of anointing him, who was most holy, as infinitely excelling all those who were anointed with holy oil. He is also said to be anointed to execute his kingly office; and, with respect thereunto, is called the Lord's anointed; and God says, concerning him, *I have set*, or as it is in the margin, *anointed, my king upon my holy hill of Sion*, Psal. ii. 2. Now there are three things which are more especially intended in this unction, which are particularly mentioned in this answer.

1. His being set apart, or separated from the rest of mankind, as the only Person who was designed to execute the offices, together with his public investiture therein. For the right understanding of which, let it be considered, that there was an eternal designation of him by the Father thereunto: thus the apostle speaks of him, as one *who was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. i. 20. And some think, that this is intended by that expression of the Psalmist, *I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. ii. 7. and that this is also intended by *his being set up from everlasting*, Prov. viii. 23. This we may call his eternal inauguration, which was the foundation, ground, and reason of his incarnation, or of that inauguration, or investiture, which was visible to men in time, which is the second thing to be considered, in his being set apart to execute these offices.

When he came into the world, there was a glorious declaration given, both to angels and men, that he was the Person whom God had conferred this honour upon, and accordingly he received glory from them, as Mediator, by a divine warrant; so some understand that scripture, *When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6. And elsewhere we read, Luke ii. 10, 11. of the angels being sent as heralds, to make proclamation of this matter to men, at his first coming into the world. And, when he entered on his public ministry, there was a divine declaration given, as a farther visible confirmation hereof, immediately after his baptism, when *the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 16, 17. and John the Baptist was immediately raised up, as a prophet, to signify this to the world, which he did at that time, when our Saviour first entered on his public ministry, and speaks of him, as *preferred before himself*, not only as having a more ex-

cellent nature, but as being set apart to an higher office, than that which he was called to; and accordingly he styles him, *The Lamb of God*, intimating, that God had set him apart, as the great Sacrifice that was to be offered for sin, John i. 29, 30. and, soon after this, he gives another testimony hereunto, together with a glorious, yet just, character of the Person, who was invested with this authority, when he says, concerning him, *A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven*: q. d. “I have not received this honour of being the Christ, and doing the works which he does, but it is given him from heaven: I am not the *bridegroom* of the church, but *his friend*, who *rejoice greatly*, because of his voice; what he hath seen and heard, that he testified; and God hath sent him, whose word he speaketh; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand, John iii. 27—35. therefore he is set apart, by him, to perform the work of a Mediator, which belongeth not unto me.”

2. Christ was furnished with authority, or had a commission given him, to perform the work he was engaged in, as Mediator. This was absolutely necessary, since, as the apostle says, concerning the priesthood in general, that *no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God*, and authorized by him to perform it, as was Aaron; so also Christ glorified not himself, but he that said unto him, *Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee*; and, *Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*, Heb. v. 4—6. As it was reckoned an intrusion, and no other than an instance of profaneness, for any one to exercise a sacred office, without a divine warrant, it was necessary that our Saviour should be furnished therewith: the work he was to perform was glorious, the consequences thereof of the highest importance, and his services would not have been accepted, or availed to answer the great ends thereof, had he not received a commission from the Father. And that he came into the world with this commission and authority, derived from him, he constantly asserts and proves, he asserts it, when speaking concerning himself, that *God the Father had sealed him*, John vi. 27. and elsewhere says, *I have power to lay down my life, and to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father*, John x. 18. and he not only asserts, but proves it; every miracle that he wrought being a confirmation thereof, in which respect a divine testimony was affixed to his commission: thus he says, *The works that I do, in my Father's name, they bear witness of me*, ver. 25. and elsewhere, when he asserts his authority, and proves, that *the words which he spake, he spake not of himself*; he adds, *the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works*, John xiv. 10, 11. He appeals to those miraculous works,

which were performed either by himself, or by the Father, which he might well do, because the Father and he had the same divine power, and thereby intimates, that the commission, which he received from the Father, was attested in this extraordinary manner.

3. Our Saviour's unction included in it an ability to execute those offices, which he was engaged in, as Mediator. We have before observed, that when persons, under the ceremonial law, were anointed to execute the offices either of prophet, priest, or king; this was not only an ordinance, to signify that they had a divine warrant to execute them, but they were hereby given to expect those qualifications that were necessary to the discharge thereof. God never calls to an office, but he qualifies for it: thus our Saviour was furnished with ability, as well as authority; this was more especially applicable to his human nature, in which he was to obey and suffer; as to his divine nature, that could not be the subject of a derived power, or qualifications conferred upon it. Now this ability, with which our Saviour was furnished, as man, was that which rendered him fit to perform the work which he came into the world about. As a Prophet, he was qualified to preach the gospel with greater wisdom and authority than all others, who were ever engaged in this work: his very enemies confessed, that *never man spake like him*, John vii. 46. and he had continual assistance from God, which preserved him from all mistakes; so that what he delivered was infallibly true, and, as such to be depended on: he was also furnished with zeal for the glory of God, yet such as was tempered with sympathy, meekness, and compassion towards his people; and an holy courage, resolution, and fortitude, which preserved him from fainting, or being discouraged under all his sufferings; and a constant disposition and inclination to refer all to the glory of the Father, and not to assume any branch of divine honour to his human nature; and, by this means, the whole discharge of his ministry was acceptable, both to God and man.

Thus concerning the reasons why our Saviour is called Christ. And this leads us to consider the offices which he was anointed to execute, upon the account whereof he is styled, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. Here we shall premise some things in general concerning these three offices: and then speak to each of them, as contained in the following answers.

1. Concerning the number of the offices, which he executes; they are *three*. Some have enquired, whether there are not more than three executed by him, inasmuch as there are several characters and relations, which Christ is described by, and is said to stand in, to his people, besides those of Prophet,



Priest, and King: thus he is styled, *The Head of the body, the church*, Col. i. 18. and *an Husband*, to it, Isa. liv. 5. and a *Bridegroom*, John iii. 29. and elsewhere he is said to perform the office of a *Shepherd*: thus he styles himself, *The good Shepherd*, John x. 14. and he is called, *The Captain of our salvation*, Heb. ii. 10. and many other characters of the like nature are given him, from whence some have taken occasion to think, that several of them contain ideas, distinct from those of a Prophet, Priest, and King, and therefore that there are more offices than these executed by him: but all that need be said to this, is, that these, and other characters and relations, which are ascribed to Christ in scripture, are all included in, or reducible to one or other of these three offices; therefore we have no reason to conclude, that he executes any other offices, distinct from them, as Mediator.

2. The condition of fallen man, and the way in which God designed to bring him to salvation, which was adapted thereunto, renders it necessary that Christ should execute these three offices. Accordingly, we are all of us, by nature, ignorant of, and prejudiced against divine truth, as the apostle observes, *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. therefore it is necessary that Christ should execute the office of a Prophet, to lead us into all truth, and give this spiritual discerning thereof.

Moreover, we are all *guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. and can by no means make atonement, give satisfaction to his justice, or procure a pardon; nor can we plead any thing done by us, as a ground thereof; therefore we need that Christ should execute the office of a Priest, and so first make atonement, and then intercession, for us.

And as to the way in which God brings his people to salvation, this requires Christ's executing his threefold office. Salvation must be purchased, proclaimed, and applied; the first of these respects Christ's Priestly office; the second, his Prophetical; and the third, his Kingly; accordingly he is said to be *made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30. and elsewhere he styles himself, *The Way, the Truth, and the Life*, John xiv. 6.

Moreover, in the execution of these offices, and bringing us thereby to salvation, he deals with God and man in different respects; with God, more especially, as a Priest, in satisfying his justice, and procuring his favour: thus the high priest under the law, who was a type of Christ's Priestly office, is said to be *ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*, Heb. v. 1. even so Christ,

our great High Priest, by offering himself a sacrifice, performed that part of his ministry which pertained to God, in the behalf of men; and he also deals with God, by appearing in his presence, continually making intercession for them; and, on the other hand, he deals with men, as designing to bring them to God, which he does more especially as a Prophet and King.

3. These three offices, which Christ executes, are distinct, and therefore not to be confounded. This we maintain against Socinus, and his followers: they speak, indeed, of Christ, as a Prophet, Priest, and King, which they are obliged to do, because the words are so frequently mentioned in scripture; yet the sense they give of them, amounts to little more than an acknowledgment of his Prophetical office: and even this, as they explain it, contains in it nothing more than what other prophets, that went before him, either were, or might have been, qualified to perform; for any one, who is under divine inspiration, may infallibly declare the will of God, and give forth those laws, by which God has ordained that his church should be governed; and our Saviour, according to them, does little more than this. They speak of him, indeed, as a Priest, but not as making satisfaction for our sins to the justice of God, nor by interceding in the virtue thereof, but only by putting up prayers and supplications to him on our behalf; which differs very little from those prayers and supplications that were put up by other prophets in behalf of the people.

Again, they speak of him as a King, but not as subduing our wills, or conquering our enemies, by almighty power; or, if they allow that he subdues us to himself, as a King, yet, in their farther explaining thereof, they mean nothing else by it, but his gaining us over to his side by arguments, freeing us from our ignorance, and over-coming our prejudices against truth, by a clear revelation of it; or, if they speak of his conquering our enemies, they intend nothing else by it, but his guarding and defending his people, by furnishing them with arguments to resist their subtle attempts against them, all which things are reducible to his Prophetical office; so that, though they speak of him as executing three offices, it is no more than if they should assert, that he executes but one; and the most they intend by all this, is, that he is a teacher, sent from God, and consequently not much superior in excellency to Moses, who was a prophet, raised up from among his brethren, and had the honourable character given him, that he was *faithful in all his house*; whereas, the apostle proves, by what he says of our Lord Jesus, that he was *counted worthy of more glory, as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house*; and farther styles him a divine Person, when he says, *he that built all things is God*, Heb. iii. 2, 3.

4. These three offices, which Christ executes, are not to be divided, especially when they are executed in such a way, as is effectual to the salvation of those who are concerned herein. He may, indeed, in an objective way, reveal the will of God, or give laws to his church, as a Prophet, without working savingly upon the understanding: he may also execute his kingly office, as a judge, in pouring the vials of his wrath on his enemies, without subduing the stubbornness of their wills, or bringing them to the obedience or faith: nevertheless, we must conclude, that, wheresoever he executes one of these offices in a saving way, he executes them all. In this respect, though the offices be distinguished, yet in the execution of them, they are not divided: thus whosoever is so taught by him, as a Prophet, as to be made wise to salvation, is redeemed by his blood, as a Priest, overcome by his power as a King, and brought into subjection to his will in all things; so all for whom, as a priest, he has purchased peace, to them he will, in his own time, proclaim it, as a Prophet, and enable them to believe in him, by making them willing in the day of his power.

5. He executes these offices in a twofold state; first, of humiliation, and then of exaltation, with different circumstances agreeable thereunto; which twofold state will be considered in some following answers. What we shall observe, at present, concerning it is, that that part of Christ's priestly office, in which he made atonement for sin, was executed on earth in his state of humiliation; whereas the other part thereof, consisting in his intercession, together with some branches of his prophetic and kingly office, were executed both in earth and heaven, though in a different manner, agreeable to those circumstances of glory in which he was, and is.

**QUEST. XLIII.** *How doth Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

**ANSW.** Christ executeth the office of a Prophet, in his revealing to the church, in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

**T**HAT which may be first observed, before we consider the parts of Christ's prophetic office, and the manner of his executing it, is the order in which it is mentioned, as set before his priestly and kingly offices, which may give us occasion to enquire whether it be executed before them.

1. If we consider the natural order of his executing his three offices, or the dependence of the execution of them, one on the



other, then it must be observed, that he first executes his priestly office, and, pursuant hereunto, his prophetical and kingly ; for sinners must first be redeemed by his blood, before they can be brought to a saving knowledge of him, or an entire subjection to him ; therefore he first deals with God as a Priest, in our behalf, and thereby prepares the way of salvation, and lays the foundation thereof, in his oblation and intercession, and then, as a Prophet and King, he deals with men, and thereby brings them to God. In this respect, therefore, if these three offices were to be laid down in their natural order, we must say, that Christ executes the office of a Priest, Prophet, and King.

2. If we consider the order in which our Saviour executed these offices, in the exercise of his public ministry, we may say, he first produced his commission, or proclaimed the end of his coming into the world, and proved himself to be the Messiah, and so discovered himself to his people, as the great Prophet of his church ; and, after that, he laid down his life, as a sacrifice for sin, as a Priest, and then he conquered his enemies, spoiled principalities and powers, and exerted the exceeding greatness of his power, in the application of redemption, as a King. It is in this respect that the offices of Christ are generally treated of, in the same method in which they are here laid down ; so that his prophetical office is first mentioned, which is what we are now to consider. And,

I. We shall shew how Christ is described, in scripture, as the Prophet of his church. There are many expressions whereby his prophetical office is set forth : Thus he is styled, *a Teacher come from God*, John iii. 2. and he calls himself our *Master*, Matt. xxiii. 8. or the Lord of our faith, and, as such, is distinguished from all other teachers, some of which affected very much to be called Rabbi, and would persuade the world, by an implicit faith, to believe whatever they said : But our Saviour advises his disciples to refuse that title ; for, says he, *One is your master, even Christ*.

Again, he is called, *a law-giver*, Mat. xxiii. 22. or, the one and only lawgiver ; and, it is added, that he differs from all other law-givers, in that he is *able to save, and to destroy*, James iv. 12. he is also called, *The Angel, or Messenger of the covenant*, who reveals the covenant of grace to us ; and brings these glad tidings, that is, in him, reconciling the world to himself.

He is also called, *The apostle*, as well as the high Priest, of our profession, Heb. iii. 1. as he was first sent of God to publish peace, before he appointed others, who are called apostles, or inferior ministers to him, to pursue the same design. He is also styled, *A witness to the people*, their leader and commander, Isa. lv. 4. and he is farther described, as a *faithful witness*, Rev. i. 5.

And he is set forth by several metaphorical expressions, which denote the execution of this office, *viz.* *The light which shineth in darkness*, John i. 5. Thus the prophet Isaiah describes him, when he says, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*, Isa. lx. 1. He is likewise compared to the sun, the fountain of light, and so called, *The Sun of righteousness*, that was *to arise with healing in his wings*, Mal. iv. 2. and, *The bright and morning star*, Rev. xxii. 16. by which, and many other expressions to the same purpose, this prophetic office of Christ is set forth in scripture.

II. We shall now consider what Christ does in the execution of his prophetic office, as he is said to reveal the will of God to his church. And,

1. How he was qualified for this work, which supposes him to have a perfect knowledge of the divine will. We have before observed, that the Socinians, agreeably to the low thoughts they have of him, as a mere creature, suppose, that he was unacquainted with the will of God till he entered on his public ministry; and, in order to his being instructed therein, that he was, soon after his baptism, taken into heaven, and there learned, from the Father, what he was to impart to mankind, which they suppose to be the meaning of those scriptures, that speak of him, as *coming down from heaven*, or *coming forth from the Father*, into the world, John vi. 38. compared with chap. xvi. 28. and his *speaking as the Father had taught him*, or *what he had seen with his Father*, chap. viii. 28, 38. But, since we have shewn the absurdity of this opinion elsewhere, when speaking in defence of our Saviour's deity \*, and have considered that those scriptures, which mention his coming down from heaven, plainly refer to his incarnation, and that the mode of expression is the same, as when God is said, in other scriptures, to come down into this lower world, by his manifestative presence here, which is not inconsistent with his omnipresence; therefore I shall only add, at present, that those scriptures, which speak of Christ's being taught the things which he was to impart to the church, as they do not overthrow the omniscience of his divine nature; so they give no countenance to this supposition, that his human nature was taken up into heaven to be taught the will of God. In this nature, indeed, he needed instruction, and had no knowledge but what he received by communication; and it is plainly said of him, that he *increased in wisdom*, as he advanced in age: But the knowledge which he had, as man, which was sufficient to furnish him for the execution of this office, proceeded from a two-fold cause, namely, the union of that nature with his divine Person, the result whereof was, his having all those perfections that belong to it, of which the knowledge of

\* See Vol. 1. Page 347—350.

divine things is one; for it would have been a dishonour to him, as God, to be united to a nature that had the least blemish or defect, or was unqualified to perform the work which he was therein to engage in. And, besides this, our Saviour had an unction from the Holy Ghost, which, as has been already observed, implies not only his receiving a commission, but, together therewith, all necessary qualifications to discharge the work he was engaged in, which include in them his knowing the whole will of God; as it is said, *God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him*, John iii. 34. that is, he gave it in a greater measure to him, than he ever did to any other, as the work, that he was to engage in, required it.

2. Let us now consider what is the will of God, which Christ reveals. This includes in it every thing that relates to our salvation, or that is necessary to be known and believed by us, in order thereunto, viz. that God had an eternal design to glorify his grace, in the recovery of a part of mankind from that guilt and misery, in which they were involved, and putting them into the possession of complete blessedness; and that, in order hereunto, each of the Persons in the Godhead designed to demonstrate their distinct Personal glory, that, in this respect, they might receive adoration and praise from men; the Father, as sending our Saviour, to be a Redeemer; the Son, as taking that character and work upon him; and the Spirit, as applying the redemption purchased by him.

Moreover, he was to make a public proclamation that salvation was attainable; and that the way to attain it, was by sinners coming to him as a Mediator, by whom they might have access to the Father; and to invite them to come to him by faith, as he often does in the gospel. He was also to let them know, that this faith is the gift of God, and in what way they may expect to attain it, to wit, in a constant attendance on the ordinances of his own appointment; and, to encourage them hereunto, that there are many great and precious promises, which are all put into his hand, to apply and make good to his people. These, and many other things, which contain in them the sum and substance of the gospel, are what we understand by the will of God, which Christ communicates, as a Prophet, to his church. As it may be observed, that these doctrines are such as are matter of pure revelation, which could not have been known without it, as well as of the highest importance, and therefore worthy to be made known by so excellent a Person. And this leads us to consider,

III. The persons to whom Christ reveals the will of God, namely, the church; to them the lively oracles of God are committed; and they are built on the foundations of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone.



As for the world, which is sometimes opposed to the church, it is said, that, *by wisdom it knew not God*, 1 Cor. i. 21. that is, not in such a way as he is revealed in the gospel; but the church, which Christ loved, and for which he gave himself, is said to be *sanctified by the word*, Eph. v. 26. and *to them it is given, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to others it is not given*, Matt. xiii. 11. so that the church is the seat, and the object of the execution of Christ's prophetic, as well as of his other offices; *They are taught by him as the truth is in Jesus*, Eph. iv. 21.

IV. We are now to consider the way and means by which Christ reveals the will of God to the church; there are two ways by which this is done.

1. Objectively, which is an external method of instruction, the effect and consequence whereof is our hearing of him by the hearing of the ear, or as the apostle calls it, our *having the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*, Rom. ii. 20. This instruction Christ is said to give by the word: And this he did; first, by publishing the glad tidings of salvation in his own Person, which he mentions, as one great end for which he was sent into the world, as he says, *I must preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent*, Luke iv. 43. and accordingly he styles himself, *The Light of the world*, John viii. 12. and it is said, that *he was anointed to preach good things unto the meek, sent to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*, Isa. lxi. 1. and when he is represented, as complying with the call of God, and *delighting to do his will*, he adds, *I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest, I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation; I have not concealed thy loving-kindness, and thy truth, from the great congregation*, Psal. xl. 9, 10. And as Christ preached the gospel in his own Person, so, when he left the world, he gave commission to others to preach it, and his Spirit to instruct them what they should deliver, by whose inspiration his word was committed to writing, which is the fountain of all truth; and, by this means, the church attains, as at this day, the knowledge thereof.

2. Our Saviour reveals the will of God to his people, in a subjective way, which is internal, whereby he deals with their hearts, which he disposes and fits to receive the truth: Hereby he opens the eyes of the understanding, to see a beauty and glory in the gospel, and inclines all the powers and faculties of the soul to be conformed to it; and this he does more especially in those in whom he executes his prophetic office effectually, unto salvation. This is styled, in this answer, Christ's execu-

ting his prophetical office by his Spirit, as distinguished from the execution thereof by his word. We read sometimes of the Spirit's teaching us, in scripture as our Saviour tells his disciples, that He, viz. the Spirit, *would guide them into all truth*, John xvi. 13. and of believers *having their souls purified, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit*, 1 Pet. i. 22. and at other times of Christ's teaching by his Spirit. Now there is no essential difference between Christ's teaching as God, and the Spirit's teaching, since the divine glory of the Son and Spirit, to which this effect is attributed, is the same: But Christ's teaching by his Spirit, only denotes, as was before observed under a foregoing answer, the subserviency of the Spirit's acting herein, to Christ's executing this branch of his prophetical office, whereby he demonstrates his personal glory \*.

V. We are now to consider the various ages in which Christ is said to execute this office. That he did this after his incarnation; first, in his own Person, and then, by taking care that his gospel should be preached in all succeeding ages, until his second coming, has been already considered. We may also observe, that Christ executed his prophetical office before his incarnation: Thus it is said, that, *by his Spirit, he preached unto the spirits in prison*, that is, to the world before the flood, who are represented in the words immediately following, as *disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing*, 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20. so that Noah who was a prophet, was his inferior minister, raised up, and spirited by him, to preach to the world, which upon that account, is called Christ's preaching, and accordingly herein he executed his prophetical office. And he is also said to have given the law from mount Sinai, as the apostle's words seem to intimate, when he says, *Whose voice shook the earth*, Heb. xii. 26. to wit, mount Sinai, which trembled when he gave the law from thence; and that this refers to our Saviour, appears from the words immediately foregoing, wherein it is said, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh*, namely, Christ; *for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth*, to wit, from mount Sinai, or when he spake on earth, *much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him, that speaketh from heaven; whose voice then shook the earth*, &c. ver. 25.

Moreover, that he executed his prophetical office before his incarnation, and thereby led his church into the knowledge of divine truth, is evident, from the account we have, in scripture, of his appearing to them in the form of a man, or an angel, which he more frequently did, before the word of God was committed to writing, and afterwards occasionally in following ages: Thus he appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and

\* See Vol. I. Page 291, 292.

sent him into Egypt to demand liberty for Israel, and afterwards he led them through the red sea, as appearing in the pillar of the cloud and fire; and he is described, as *the angel which was with Moses in the church in the wilderness which spake to him in mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles*, Acts vii. 38. which is a farther proof of what was before mentioned, that he gave the law from thence; and while they travelled through the wilderness, he *led them about*, or went before them, in the pillar of cloud, and *instructed them*, Deut. xxxii. 10. so that all the knowledge of divine things, which they attained to, was the result of the execution of his prophetic office unto them. And when at any time they opposed Moses, his under-minister, he appeared in Person and vindicated him; as in that particular instance, occasioned by Aaron's and Miriam's speaking against him, wherein it is said, *The Lord came down in a pillar of a cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and said, If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream; my servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house*, Numb. xii. 5—7. which is a farther intimation, that Christ then executed his prophetic office, by inspiring the prophets, who were raised up at that time.\*

To conclude this head, we may observe the difference between Christ's executing his Prophetic office, before and after his incarnation. In the former of these, as was but now hinted, he occasionally assumed the likeness of the human nature, that he might the better converse with man, but was not really incarnate; in the latter, he delivered the mind and will of God, as dwelling in our nature. Before this, he discovered what was necessary to be known by the church at that time, and gave them those promises which related to the work of our redemption, to be performed by him: but, in the present execution of his Prophetic office, he opens a more glorious scene, and represents all those promises, as having their accomplishment in him, and displays the divine perfections, in bringing about our salvation, in their greatest beauty and lustre.

QUEST. XLIV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Priest?*

ANSW. Christ executeth the office of a Priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice, without spot, to God, to be a re-

\* The force of this argument, and the application of these and several other scriptures to Christ, depend upon this supposition, which, we take for granted, and, were it needful, might easily be proved, that whenever a divine person is said, in scripture, to appear in the form of an angel, or to appear in a cloud as a symbol, or emblem of his presence, this is always meant of our Saviour. But compare Watts's Works, 5 vol. 381, and Edwards's Works, 4 vol. 491.



conciliation for the sins of his people, and in making continual intercession for them.

**I**N considering Christ's Priestly office, as described in this answer, we may observe the two great branches thereof, namely, the offering himself a sacrifice; and making intercession. There are several scriptures which expressly mention both of them: thus he is said, *through the eternal Spirit, to have offered himself, without spot, to God*, Heb. ix. 14. and then described as having *entered into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us*, ver. 24. and elsewhere the apostle speaks of him, as *having an unchangeable priesthood, and being able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him*, and that this is founded on his offering up himself, and making intercession for them, chap. vii. 24, 25, 27. In considering this, we may observe,

I. The reason of his being styled a Priest, which denomination was taken from those who exercised the priestly office under the ceremonial law, who were types of him, as such: accordingly we may consider; that the office of the priesthood was executed by sundry persons, appointed to this service. A priest was a public minister, who was to serve at the altar, *to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins*, Heb. v. 1. That these were offered in all the ages of the church, after the fall of man, appears, from the sacrifice that Abel offered, which the apostle calls an *excellent* one, and, upon this occasion, says, that *he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts*, Heb. xi. 4. and therefore it follows, that it was instituted by him: yet it does not appear that there was, in that early age of the church, a set of men solemnly and publicly invested in this office: but the heads of families are generally supposed to have been the public ministers in holy things, and particularly priests, though they do not appear to have been then so styled; and thus it continued till about the time that God brought Israel out of Egypt, when, by his appointment, all the first-born of the children of Israel were consecrated to him; and these officiated as priests, during that small interval of time, till the priesthood was settled in the tribe of Levi, upon which occasion God says, *I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born, because all the first-born are mine; for on the day that I smote all the first-born, in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel*, Numb. iii. 12, 13. And, when God gave the ceremonial law from mount Sinai, he appointed that tribe to minister as priests in holy things. Of these some had one part of the ministry of the sanctuary committed to them, and others another; particularly the priesthood, or the charge of offering gifts and sacrific

ces, was more, especially committed to the family of Aaron, of which the eldest son, in their respective generations, was generally advanced to the high priesthood, and other descendants from him were common priests, who acted under, or were assistants to him in all the parts of his ministry, excepting that which respected his entering into the holy of holies. These were invested in their respective offices by unction, though the high priest's office and unction had some things peculiar in it, in which it exceeded theirs; and they were all types of Christ's priesthood, though the high priest was so in an eminent degree; which leads us to consider,

II. The Priesthood of Christ, as typified under the ceremonial law, and that either by the service which was commonly performed by the high priest, and other priests under him, or as it was typified by Melchizedec, who is occasionally mentioned in scripture, as shadowing forth Christ's Priesthood in some particular instances, which were not contained in other types thereof.

1. We shall speak concerning the priests under the law, as types of Christ's Priesthood, and particularly shew wherein their priesthood agrees with, or differs from his.

(1.) Wherein they agree.

1st, *Every high priest was taken from among men*, as the apostle observes, Heb. v. 1. *and was ordained for men in things pertaining to God.* And, to this we may add, that he was taken from among his brethren, and so must be a member of that church, in whose name he administered, and of which he was the head, by the dignity of his office. In this, he was a lively type of Christ, who, in order to his being an High Priest, became man, that he might perform this ministry for men in things pertaining to God. It is true, the validity of his office, or the efficacy thereof to answer its designed end, arose from the dignity of his Person, as God; yet the matter thereof, or the ministry he performed, required that he should be taken from among men, and have all the essential properties of the human nature; so that, as the high priest was taken out of the church, or from among his brethren, and, by office, was the head thereof, Christ was a member of the church, and, as such, complied with those ordinances which God had instituted therein, and from the dignity of his Person and office, was the Head thereof: as a Member of it, he was exposed to the same temptations and miseries as they are, and so is able to sympathize with, and succour them under all their temptations, Heb. iv. 15. compared with chap. v. 2. and as the Head thereof, he manages all affairs relating to it, and expects that all his people should be entirely subjected to him.

2dly, The matter of the priest's office, or the things that were

offered by him, were, as was before observed, gifts and sacrifices offered for the remission of sins; which blessing could not be attained without shedding of blood, as the apostle observes, *without shedding of blood there is no remission*, chap. ix. 22. Thus Christ was to redeem his people, and procure forgiveness of sins, and make atonement for them by sacrifice, or by the shedding of blood.

3dly, After the high priest had offered sacrifices, there was another part of that ministry, which was peculiar to himself, in which he was an eminent type of Christ, which he performed but once a year, to wit, on the great day of expiation, when he went into the holiest of all within the vail, with blood and incense; the blood he sprinkled on the mercy-seat over the ark, and caused the smoke of the incense to ascend and cover the mercy-seat, and from thence he received an intimation from God, that the sacrifices, which he had offered for the people, were accepted, after which he went out, and blessed them, in the name of the Lord; in all which, he was a lively type of Christ's executing his Priestly office, chap. ix. 3, 7. compared with Lev. xvi. 14. who first offered an acceptable sacrifice for us on earth, and then entered into heaven, (which was typified by the priest's entering into the holy of holies) to present his sacrifice before God, and to make intercession for us; and, as the consequence hereof, he blesses his people, in turning them from all their iniquities, and in conferring all the other fruits and effects of his sacrifice upon them. Thus Christ's Priesthood was shadowed forth by that ministry, which was performed by the priests under the ceremonial law; nevertheless,

(2.) There were many things in which they differed; as,

1st, The priests under the law were mere men; but Christ, though truly man, was more than a man. Though he was made, in all the essential properties of the human nature, like unto us; yet he had a divine nature, in which he was equal with God; and therefore his ministry could not but be infinitely more valuable, than that of any others, who were types of him.

2dly, The priests under the law were of the tribe of Levi, and therefore theirs is called, by the apostle, *The Levitical priesthood*, Heb. vii. 11. But our Saviour, as Man, was of the tribe of Judah, and therefore did not derive his priesthood from them by descent, as they did from one another, chap. vii. 13, 14.

3dly, The sacrifices which were offered by the priests under the law, were no other than the blood of beasts, appointed for that purpose; but Christ offered his own blood, chap. ix. 12, 14.

4thly, The priests under the law were sinners; accordingly Aaron was obliged *first* to offer up *sacrifice for his own sins, and then for the peoples'*, chap. vii. 27. but Christ needed not



to do this, for *he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners*, ver. 26.

5thly, The sacrifices offered by the priests under the law, could not expiate, or *take away sins*, chap. x. 4. but Christ, by the offering that he has made, has *for ever perfected them that are sanctified*, or made a full atonement for all sin. Now since it is said, that it was impossible for sin to be expiated by the sacrifices under the law, we are to enquire in what sense atonement was, or could not be made thereby: if the sin was of such a nature, or that it was punishable by human judicature, the making atonement by sacrifice, in many instances, put a stop to the prosecution, and took away the guilt, which the person had contracted, as to any farther proceedings of men against him; for this was an ordinance appointed by God, in which the offender had an external and visible recourse to the blood of Jesus, signified by the blood which he offered; and this is supposed to have been accompanied with repentance for the sin committed, which gave satisfaction to the church, as to what concerned this matter, as offensive to them; and they could demand no more of the offender, in order to their declaring, that, so far as they were judges, his guilt was expiated, by that which was signified by the sacrifice which he brought, which was offered for him, and therefore the crime that he committed was pardoned.

It is true, there were some crimes that were to be punished with death; and, in this case, the church was not to receive satisfaction by sacrifice, nor were proceedings against the guilty person to be stopped by this means: and, among other crimes, that of wilful murder was one which admitted of no sacrifice; so, I think, the meaning of what the Psalmist says, is to be understood, *Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it*, Psal. li. 16. as implying, that the guilt of blood was such, that he had hereby forfeited his life, which, though no subject had power enough to take away, yet God might, for this, have set his face against him, and have cut him off, in a visible manner, from among his people, as he often did, when crimes were not punished in a legal way. This punishment God graciously remitted, when he told him, by Nathan, that *he had put away his sin, he should not die*, 2 Sam. xii. 13. and David, when he testifies his repentance, in this Psalm, would have offered sacrifice, but he finds that none was ordained for the sin he had committed. In other cases, indeed, the church was satisfied, excommunication, or some other punishment, prevented, and the offender taken into favour, by his offering sacrifice, in which respect, this service is called making atonement for him: but, in other respects, it was impossible to expiate sin thereby, so as to procure justification in the sight of God; for they could

not expiate it, as to what concerns the conscience, as it is said, that *the sacrifices could not make him, that did the service, perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. so that, that guilt of sin, which burdens the consciences of men, as having more immediately to do with God, was taken away only by Christ's sacrifice; in which respect, the efficacy hereof far exceeds all the ends and designs of the sacrifices, which were offered under the law. And this farther appears, inasmuch as these sacrifices were to be repeated, there being a continual remembrance of sin; for this supposes, that sin was not hereby wholly expiated in the sight of God: and, in this, they also differ from the sacrifice Christ offered, inasmuch as that, being effectual to take away sin, was offered but once, chap. x. 10, 14.

6thly, The priests under the law were mortal, and therefore the priesthood was successive; but Christ, as he was not from them by a lineal descent so he had no successor in his priesthood. In this, the apostle opposes him to them, when he says, *They truly were many, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood*, chap. vii. 23.

Again, as the priesthood ceased, in particular persons, by death, so the high priesthood was sometimes taken away from those that were advanced unto it, for some instances of maladministration: thus the high priesthood, for some time, descended in the line of Eleazar, the elder branch of Aaron's family; and afterwards, during the reign of the judges, it was transferred to the younger branch of his family, namely, the descendants from Ithamar, in which line it was when Eli was high priest; \* and afterwards, when his sons, by their vile behaviour, forfeited their right to the high priesthood, and God threatened that he would take it away from his family, 1 Sam. ii. 30. compared with ver. 35. and 1 Kings ii. 35. (which was accomplished when Abiathar, in the beginning of Solomon's reign, was thrust from the priesthood) it again descended in Zadock, to the elder branch of Aaron's family.

\* It is very hard to determine the reason of the translation of the high priesthood from Eleazar to Ithamar's family, or the exact time when this was done. The learned Dr. Lightfoot [See his Works, Vol. I. page 51.] gives a very probable account hereof, or the best conjecture that, I think, can be made relating to it, which is this. He supposes, that Jephthah offered his daughter, not as devoting her to perpetual virginity, but by putting her to death, which was one of the most vile and inhuman actions that we read of in scripture: it was, in Jephthah, a sin of ignorance, arising from the disadvantage of his education, and the ill example of those from whom he took it, before he was raised up to be a Judge: but the high priest ought to have restrained him from it, by telling him, that it was a sin; whereas, instead thereof, it is more than probable that he was active herein, or the person by whom this sacrifice was performed; and consequently this was such an instance of bad administration, that, for it, the high priesthood was taken from that branch of Aaron's family, in which it then was, and transferred to another.

Again the priesthood itself was not designed to continue for ever, but only during that dispensation; after which, there was to be no altar, priests nor, sacrifice: But Christ's priesthood, as it was unalienable, so it could never be forfeited by male-administration, or descend to any other; therefore he is said to be a *Priest for ever*, which seems to be the meaning of that scripture, in which his priesthood is considered, as different from the Levitical priesthood, as *those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever*, chap. vii. 21. which oath not only signifies the establishing of him in his priesthood, but it secured to him that he should never fall from it.

There are other things in which Christ's priesthood differs from that of the priests under the law, in that *they entered into the holy places made with hands, but Christ into heaven it self*, chap. ix. 7. compared with ver. 24. and then it was only the high priest that was to enter into the holy of holies: But, as the apostle observes, that under the gospel, in the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, all believer's are admitted into the holiest of all, that is, they have access through faith, into the presence of God, by the blood of Jesus.

And lastly, under the law, there was a certain order of men that were priests, and yet all the people were not so; but, under the gospel-dispensation, believers are styled, an *holy* and a *royal priesthood*, and the sacrifices they offer up, are *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. And this leads us,

2. To consider Christ's priesthood, as typified by Melchizedek, concerning whom it is said, in Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20. that Melchizedek, *king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, returning from the slaughter of the kings; and he was priest of the most high God, and he blessed him, &c.* And this is referred to, as tending to set forth Christ's priesthood, in Psal. cx. 4. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek*; and the apostle, in Heb. vii. refers to these scriptures, which are the only places of the Old Testament where this is mentioned, and applies them to Christ's priesthood as containing many things which were not typified by the Aaronical priesthood. And it may be observed, that when the apostle enters on this subject, he premises this concerning it, that it contained a very great difficulty, as he says, *Of whom [i. e. Melchizedek] we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered*, Heb. v. 11. that is, hard to be explained, so as to be fully understood; it will be no strange thing therefore if we cannot fully explain it, or assert some things concerning it, which are only probable; and



certainly this observation of the apostle should induce us to treat on this subject with the greatest humility and modesty. As to what we have to say concerning it, I hope we shall advance nothing contrary to the analogy of faith, how difficult soever some phrases, used in scripture, relating thereunto, may seem to be: And the method in which we shall proceed, shall be; *first*, to enquire who this Melchizedek was; and, *secondly*, how we have herein an eminent type of Christ's priesthood in some things, in which it was not shadowed forth by the Aaronical priesthood.

We shall now enquire who this Melchizedek probably was; and here we pass by the conjecture of some who lived in an early age of Christianity, whom Epiphanius mentions\*, who supposed that he was the Holy Ghost; which appears to be a very absurd notion, inasmuch as we never read in scripture, of the Holy Ghost's appearing in the form of a man, nor of his performing any of those offices which belong to the Mediator; and therefore it is equally contrary, to the tenor of scripture, to call him the priest of the most high God, as it is to call the Father so; and thus Melchizedek is styled, in the scripture we are explaining. I shall add no more, as to this ungrounded opinion; but proceed to consider that which is more commonly acquiesced in, namely,

*First*, That he was a man: But when it is farther enquired, what man? there are three different opinions relating hereunto.

(1.) The Jews generally conclude that he was Shem, the son of Noah, as also do many other ancient and modern writers, who pay a deference to their authority and reasoning†. The principal thing that induces them to be of this opinion, is, because it appears, from scripture-chronology, that Shem was living at that time, when Abraham returned from the slaughter of the kings‡. And they farther add, that Shem, having received the patriarchal benediction from his father, might truly be reckoned the greatest man in the church, and that both as a priest and a king, as Melchizedek is described to be. But

\* Vid. Ephiph. Har. Page 67. § 7. † Among the latter, is the learned Dr. Lightfoot. See his Works, Vol. I. Page 12. and Vol. II. Page 327. ‡ We have no account of the year when this battle was fought; but it is evident that it was before Isaac was born, and consequently before Abraham had lived 25 years in the land of Canaan. And that Shem was then living, appears from hence, that from the flood to Abraham's coming into the land of Canaan, was 427 years, as appears by considering the sum total of the years of the lives of the patriarchs, mentioned in Gen. xi. 10. & seq. and also that Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born, as appears, by comparing Gen. xi. 32. with Acts vii. 4. and Gen. xii. 4. and by considering Abraham as 75 years old, as it is there said he was, when he left Uravan. Now Shem was born 98 or 100 years before the flood, as appears by comparing Gen. v. 32. with chap. xi. 10. and vii. 11. Therefore, when Abraham went out of his country into the land of Canaan, Shem was 525 or 527 years old; and, when Shem died, he was 600 years old, Gen. xi. 10, 11. therefore Shem lived more than half a hundred years after this battle was fought.

there are two very considerable objections against this opinion, which have weight enough in them, if not to overthrow it, at least to make it very doubtful: namely,

1st, That Shem's father, mother, and descent, together with the beginning of his life, and afterwards the end thereof, were well known, the year when he was born, and the time that he lived, being particularly mentioned in scripture; and therefore the apostle could not say concerning him, as he does concerning Melchizedek, that *he was without father, without mother, without descent having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*; meaning, as most expositors suppose, that he was so, because these were not known, or mentioned in scripture.

2dly, It is very plain from scripture, that Shem's place of abode was not in the land of Canaan, and therefore he could not be said to be king of Salem, that is as it is understood by the greatest number of expositors, of Jerusalem; since this was the seat of the posterity of Ham, one of Shem's brethren; accordingly from Canaan, his son, that land took its name. This evidently appears from what is said in Gen. x. 6—20. where the Jebusite, Emorite, Hivite, and other inhabitants of the land of Canaan, are said to be the descendants of Ham. For these reasons, Melchizedek does not appear to have been Shem.

(2.) There is one learned writer, who conjectures that this Melchizedek was Ham\*, which, indeed, agrees very well with the place of his residence: But there are other things which render this opinion not in the least probable; not only because the same thing may be observed of Ham, as was before of Shem, that he could not be said to be without father, without mother, without beginning of years, and end of life: But it may farther be said concerning him, that he had not received the patriarchal benediction from Noah, his posterity having had a curse entailed upon them, as it is said, in Gen. ix. 25. *Cursed be Canaan*. Therefore some question, whether Ham might be reckoned a member of the church, (a) much more whether he deserved to be called a priest of the most high God, and king of righteousness; though it is true, this author † supposes, that Ham was not cursed by Noah, but only Canaan his son, and his posterity; therefore he might have been an excellent person, and deserved the character given of Melchizedek. But there are very few who will be convinced by this method of reasoning; and therefore we pass it over, and proceed to consider,

(3.) That the greatest part of divines suppose, that it is not only the safest, but most probable way of solving this difficulty, to confess, that it is impossible to determine who he was, and

\* See *Juvien's critical history*, vol. I. chap. 11. † See *critical history*, vol. I. page 110.

(a) As yet there was no church.

that the Holy Ghost has purposely concealed this matter, from us, that he might be a more eminent type of Christ; and therefore they suppose him to have been a certain unknown king and priest residing at Jerusalem, at that time when Abraham was met by him, and that this ought to put a full stop to all farther enquiries about him: upon which account, it may well be said, concerning him, that he was without father, without mother, &c. that is, these were not known; and what does not appear to be, is sometimes said, in scripture, not to be. Thus concerning their opinion, who suppose that he was a man.

*Secondly*, There is another opinion concerning him, which though not so commonly received as the first and third above mentioned, which though probably it may not be without some difficulties attending it, yet it very much deserves our consideration, namely, that Melchizedek was our Lord Jesus Christ himself, assuming, at that time, the form of a man, and personating a priest and a king, as he did on several occasions, designing thereby to prefigure his future incarnation <sup>\*</sup>(a) And it is argued in defence of this opinion,

1st, That when the apostle describes him as king of Salem, he does not hereby intend Jerusalem, or that at that time, he resided

<sup>\*</sup> *This opinion is maintained by Cunnæus, [Vid. ejusd. Repub. Hebr. Lib. III. cap. 3.] and some others after him.*

(a) "Some insist that he is none other than the *Son of God* himself, who, assuming the *appearance*, or *reality*, of humanity, exhibited to Abraham an early picture of his future priesthood.

"This is all over contemptible.—1. Because every high priest is taken from among men; the *appearance* of humanity is not enough.—2. Because if he was at that time a priest, and discharged the duties of his office, he must have "suffered often," (twice) "from the beginning of the world;" and not "by the once offering up of himself have for ever perfected them who are sanctified:" then, moreover, Abraham would have received the promised blessing, contrary to the scriptures: and, in fine, the appearance of the Son of God, as the Son of Mary, was superfluous. If, to avoid those absurdities, it be alleged that though he appeared as a priest, he did not discharge the duties of his office: then, in the first place, he is degraded into a mere pageant, an officer without functions: and, in the second place, he is stripped of all typical character: for the priest who neither *sacrifices*, nor *intercedes*, can never be a type of one who does *both*.—3. Because, if Melchisedec was the Son of God, whether in real humanity, or only in its appearance, he must have been a type of *himself*; the ideas of *identity* and *similarity* are confounded; and Paul instead of saying, ἀναστασεν ὡς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ that he was "made like to the Son of God," should have said, ὡς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, that he was the Son of God.—4. Because it would be unworthy the manly sense of Paul, to say nothing of *inspiration*, to labour through a long dissertation to prove a mere truism, which it would disgrace an idiot to utter, and insult a child to offer for information; namely, that Messiah's priesthood was very like itself.—5. Because it would be extremely irreverent to suppose, that the adorable God lifted up his hand and swore, that his Son's priesthood, should be like his Son's priesthood. An identical proposition does not require such a solemn confirmation."



there : But, as he explains it, in the words immediately following, it implies, that he was *king of peace*, as this word Salem signifies ; and accordingly he is set forth by two of those glorious titles, which are given him elsewhere in scripture, namely, king of righteousness, as it is said concerning him, that *a king shall rise and prosper, who is called, The Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. and likewise, *The Prince of Peace*, Isa. ix. 6. And that which makes this opinion more probable, is, that it doth not appear that Jerusalem was called Salem, which is supposed to be a contraction of the word Jerusalem, till some ages after this ; for, till David conquered it, it was commonly known by the name of Jebus, 1 Chron. xi. 4.

2dly, The apostle's description of him, as being *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, is rather applicable to a divine Person than a mere man. And as for the sense, which is generally given of these words, namely, that he was without father, &c. because no mention is made thereof in scripture, viz. in those two scriptures in the Old Testament, in which he is spoken of ; this seems more strained and forced, than to understand them according to the proper sense of the words ; and, if, indeed, this imports nothing else, but the silence of scripture, with relation thereunto, there are many other persons who have as great a right to this character as Melchizedek ; as Job, Elijah, &c. whereas Melchizedek is thus described, as distinguished from all others.

To this we may add, (which will farther strengthen this argument) what the apostle says, that in this respect, he was *made like the Son of God*, that is, as is generally supposed, a type of him. Now, if his being without *father, mother, descent, &c.* in the common acceptation of the words, be inconsistent with his being a type of Christ to the church, in Abraham's time, then certainly that cannot be the sense thereof ; for he was, without doubt, a type of his priestly, and kingly office to him, and the church, in his days, as well as to those who lived in following ages. Now, that he could not be a type thereof to many, who lived in that age, is evident ; for they, who lived in the place where he was born and died, knew his father, mother, descent, beginning, or end of life ; therefore he was no type of Christ's eternal priesthood to them. And as for Abraham, though he might not know his father, mother, or descent, or the exact time when he was born, and so, in that respect he might, in part, be made like to the Son of God, to him, as signifying, that his priestly office was not derived by descent, as the Aaronical priesthood descended from parents to children : yet he could not be a type of the everlasting duration of Christ's priestly office since he was then no more without end of days,

in the common sense in which that expression was taken, than Abraham, or any other who lived with him, who could not be supposed to know the time, or place, of their death. And, if, according to the common opinion, Melchizedek is said to be without father, mother, descent, &c. because there is no mention thereof in scripture, this could not be a type to Abraham, or any other, before the word of God was committed to writing.

3dly, There is another thing, which may be observed in the apostle's description of him, Heb. viii. 8. when he says, that *he liveth*, (a) and accordingly is opposed to those priests that *die*, by which he seems to be described as immortal, and so opposed to mortal men. It is not said, that he once lived, and that we have no mention made of the time of his death, but *he liveth*, which some conclude to be an ascription of that divine perfection to him, whereby he is styled the living God, or, as it is said in one of the following verses, *He ever liveth*, ver. 25. to denote his eternal priesthood; or, as he says concerning himself elsewhere, *I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore*, Rev. i. 8.

4thly, That which still makes this opinion more probable, is the consideration of the place, where they, who defend the other side of the question, suppose he lived, and the people to whom he ministered as a priest, which seems not agreeable to the character given him, as the greatest priest on earth. The inhabitants of Jerusalem, at that time, were idolaters, or at least, they had no relation to the church of God, which was then seated in Abraham's family; for, when Abraham sojourned in Gerar, not many miles distant from it, in the south-west border of the land of Canaan, he gives this description of it, that he thought surely the fear of God was not in this place; and it can hardly be supposed that Jebus, or Jerusalem, was much better. If the Canaanites had been members of the true church, Abraham would not have lived as a stranger and sojourner amongst them, not desirous to converse with them. Since therefore Jerusalem, or Salem, was inhabited by those who were not worshippers of the true God, how could Melchizedek be said to be their priest, or a minister in holy things to them? for, though an holy man may be a king over a wicked people, such an one cannot well be said to be a priest to those, who desire not to be found in the exercise of God's true worship.

5thly, It seems farther probable, that Melchisedek was not a priest, or king, whose usual place of residence was Jerusalem, where he administered and reigned, inasmuch as we do not read that Abraham, at any other time, conversed, or joined with him in worship, though the place where he sojourned was but a few

(a) *He liveth* for any thing to the contrary shewn in his history.

miles distant from it, which we can hardly suppose that he would have neglected to do, or that we should have had no account of any intercourse between these two men, (who must be reckoned the greatest and best that lived on earth) besides that mentioned in the scripture we are now considering.

6thly, This may be farther argued, from what the apostle says, that Melchisedek blessed Abraham, and infers, from thence, that he was superior to him, inasmuch as *the less is blessed of the better*, Heb. vii. 7. There are but two senses in which a person is said to bless another; the one is, by praying for a blessing on him, or as God's messenger, signifying, that he would bless him; and the other is, by conferring blessedness upon him, or making him blessed. Now, if Melchisedek had only blessed Abraham, in the former of these senses, which he might have done, had he been a mere man, the apostle could not have inferred from hence, his superiority to Abraham; for the lowest of men may in this sense, bless the greatest, that is, pray for a blessing on them, and God might employ such to declare to others that they are blessed; yet it would not follow, from hence, that they are, in this respect, greater than them. Melchisedek blessed Abraham, and therefore, as the apostle infers, was greater than him, and consequently he blessed him, by making him blessed, or conferring some of those blessings, which he has to bestow, as a divine Person, the Fountain of blessedness.

These are the most material arguments which are brought in defence of this opinion; from whence it seems probable, that our Saviour on this occasion assumed the form of a Man, as he often did, and appeared to Abraham with the mien and likeness of a King and Priest; as he is said elsewhere to appear to Joshua in the form of a warrior, with his sword drawn in his hand, and soon discovered to him who he was; so we may suppose, that at this time, he appeared to Abraham as a King, and a Priest, and discovered to him who he was, and the right he had to the spoils he had gained, of which he accepted the tithes, partly, to signify that this was to be the way in which the priesthood was to be supported in future ages; but principally to give herein a type of that divine homage, which we owe to him, as the Priest and King of his people. I will not be too tenacious of this side of the question, but, to me, it seems the more probable, especially if what is objected against it does not weaken the force of the arguments brought to support it; which is now to be considered.

*Object. 1.* The place of Melchisedek's residence is said to be Salem, or Jerusalem, in the land of Canaan, where he was a king and priest. Now this could not be said of our Lord Jesus Christ; for, as his kingdom was not of this world, so he never resided, or fixed his abode in any part of it before his incarna-



tion. It is true, he sometimes appeared then in the form of a Man, or an Angel, that he might occasionally converse with his people; yet he never continued long, or dwelt amongst them, till he was made flesh; whereas, Melchizedek seems to be described as an inhabitant of the land of Canaan, dwelling in Salem, therefore it cannot be meant of him.

*Answ.* This objection takes some things for granted, that will not readily be allowed, by those who entertain the contrary way of thinking, *viz.* that Salem is the name of a place, and that there he resided; whereas it may be replied to this, that it is rather a character of his person; for, if Tzedek be a character of his person, as signifying righteousness, why should it be denied that Salem, from the Hebrew word Shalom, is also a glorious character, belonging to his person? especially considering the apostle explains both of them in this sense, when he says, that these words, by interpretation, are, *King of righteousness, and King of peace*, Heb. vii. 2. and, if this be true, there is no force in the other part of the objection, taken from his residing in any particular place before his incarnation.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, that our Saviour is said to be a Priest, *after the order of Melchisedek*, chap. vii. 17. and it is also added, that *after the similitude of Melchisedek there ariseth another Priest*, ver. 15. meaning our Saviour; therefore he cannot be the same person with Melchisedek.

*Answ.* This objection is much more material than any other, which is brought against this opinion, which, I am apt to think, determines the sentiments of many, who give into the commonly received opinion concerning him: But, as it ought to be considered, whether the arguments, in defence of the other side of the question, be conclusive; so it may be replied to it; that Christ might be called a Priest, after the order of Melchisedek, though he were the person intended by him, if we take the words in this sense; *viz.* that, by his appearing in the form of a Priest and a King to Abraham, he afforded a type, or figure, of what he would really be, and do, after his incarnation, and herein gave a specimen of his Priestly and Kingly office, which he would afterwards execute. And this might as well be said to be a type hereof, as any of his appearances, in the form of a man, were typical of his incarnation, which divines generally call a prelibation thereof, which differs very little from the sense of the word *type*.

As to what is said concerning another Priest, arising *after the similitude of Melchisedek*, though it may be reckoned a strong objection against our argument; yet let it be considered, that after the similitude of Melchisedek, imports the same thing as after the order of Melchisedek; and so it signifies, that there is a similitude, or likeness, between what he then appeared to

be, and what he really was, after his incarnation. And as for his being called *another Priest*, that does not imply that he was a Priest different from Melchisedek, but from the priests under the law; for the apostle, as appears by the context, is comparing Christ's Priesthood with the Aaronical; and therefore, when he executed his Priestly office, after his incarnation, he might well be styled *another Priest*, that is, a Priest not descending from Aaron, but the anti-type of Melchisedek, as prefigured by this remarkable occurrence.

Thus concerning that difficult question, who Melchisedek was? All that I shall add is, whether it were Christ himself, or some other person, yet it is evident that there was herein a very eminent type of Christ's Kingly and Priestly office; and more especially of his Priestly, as containing in it several things that were not shadowed forth by the Aaronical priesthood; particularly, though the Aaronical priesthood contained a type of Christ's making atonement, by shedding his blood; yet there was nothing in it that typified the glory of his Person, his immortality and sinless perfection, the eternal duration of his Priesthood, or his being immediately raised up by God, for that end; nor was there herein a type of the Kingly and Priestly office of Christ, as belonging to the same Person, since the priests under the law were not kings, nor the kings priests.

Moreover, Melchisedek's being represented as *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, plainly signifies, that the execution of his priestly office depended immediately on God, who raised him up, as an extraordinary Person, for this end, as well as that he remains a Priest for ever; so that, if we take both these types together, we have a very plain and clear representation of Christ's Priestly office. And this leads us to consider,

III. The necessity of Christ's executing this part of his Priestly office, which consists in his making satisfaction to divine justice. This is generally denied by those who oppose his divinity; and particularly the Socinians, who maintain, that God pardons sin without satisfaction. (*a*) And others, who do not

(*a*) "That *death* is a punishment for sin, and that all mankind are by death offered as a *sacrifice* for sin, is not only a doctrine of revealed Religion, but the plain dictate of Reason. For, though it is Revelation alone that can teach us, how God threatened death as the punishment of a particular sin, yet Reason must be obliged to acknowledge, that men die, because they are sinners. But if men die, because they are sinners, and Reason itself must receive this, as the most justifiable cause of Death; then Reason must allow, that the death of all mankind is appointed by the true God, as a *sacrifice* for sin. But, if Reason must acknowledge the death of all mankind as a sacrifice for sin, then it can have no just objection against the sacrifice of Christ, *because* it was *human*."

Revelation, therefore, teaches nothing more hard to be believed on this point, than Reason teaches. For, if it be just and fit in God, to *appoint* and *devote* all

altogether deny the satisfaction of Christ, suppose, that God might have pardoned sin without it ; but that it was more expedient to make a demand of it, than not, inasmuch as his honour, as the Governor of the world, is secured thereby, and therefore that his demanding satisfaction, is the result of his will ; and accordingly, that he might have required and accepted of a satisfaction, less valuable than what was given him by our Saviour : This opinion is equally to be opposed with the former, as derogatory to the glory of the divine perfections.

Now, when we assert the necessity of satisfaction, we mean, that God could not, in consistency with his holiness and justice, pardon sin without it ; and that no satisfaction, short of that which Christ gave, is sufficient to answer the end designed thereby, or worthy to be accepted by God, as a price of redemption.

And, when we assert that satisfaction was necessary, we would be understood as intending it in the same sense, as forgiveness of sin, or salvation is so ; the necessity hereof being conditional, or founded on this supposition, that God designed to save sinners. This, indeed, he might have refused to have done, and then there would have been no room for satisfaction to be given to his justice : But, since God designed to be reconciled to his people, and to bring them to glory, we cannot but assert the necessity of satisfaction in order thereunto ; and, to prove this, let it be considered,

1. That the necessity hereof appears from the holiness of God ; and accordingly,

(1.) Inasmuch as he is infinitely perfect, he cannot but will and love that which is most agreeable to his nature, and which contains the brightest display of his image, which consists in righteousness and true holiness, as it is said, *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness*, Psal. xi. 7. And it follows, from hence,

(2.) That he cannot but hate, and have an infinite aversion to, whatever is contrary hereunto ; for, if his love of holiness be founded in the perfection of his nature, then his hatred of sin, which is opposite to it, must be founded therein : Thus it is said, *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*, Hab. i. 13. and elsewhere, *Thou hatest all workers of iniquity*, Psal. v. 5. Now God's hating sin, consists in his infinite opposition to it, and so it is natural to him, or in his will, to punish it ; and consequent thereunto, in his actual punishing of it. If the first of these be necessary, the others must be so likewise ; or, if he be an holy God, he cannot but determine to punish sin, and afterwards put his determination in execution.

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men to death, as the proper *punishment* of their sins ; how can it be proved to be unjust and unfit in God, to receive the death of Jesus Christ, for the same ends ?”

HUMAN REASON.



(3.) It is fit he should manifest his hatred of sin, otherwise he could not be glorified by his creatures, as an holy God; for he cannot have the glory of any attribute ascribed to him, unless there be a visible display thereof; therefore it is necessary to demonstrate his hatred of sin, by punishing it; and, hence an obligation arises from a necessity of nature, and not barely from an act of his will, to bring to condign punishment all sin, even that which he designs to pardon: But this could not have been done without a demand of satisfaction to be given, by a surety, in the sinner's behalf, which plainly evinces the necessity of satisfaction, which was the thing to be proved.

2. This farther appears, from the punishment threatened by the law of God, which is also necessary. For the understanding of which, let it be considered,

(1.) That God cannot but give a law to intelligent creatures, who, as such, are the subjects of moral government, and therefore under a natural obligation to yield obedience to him: But this they could not do, if the law were not given and promulgated.

(2.) It was necessary for God to annex a threatning to his law, in which respect punishment would be due to those who violate it, whereby obedience might be enforced, and that fear, which is excited by it, would be an additional motive hereunto; otherwise the sinner would be ready to conclude, that he might go on in his rebellion against God with impunity.

(3.) If this law be violated, as it is by sin, the truth of God, as the result of the threatning annexed to it, obliges him to punish it, either in our own persons, or in the person of our Surety, that so the honour of his law might be secured, which he is obliged to vindicate, as it contains a bright display of the glory of his perfections.

3. If God could, consistently with his own perfections, pardon sin without satisfaction, he would not have sent his well-beloved Son to suffer for it. This plainly appears from his wisdom and goodness. It is not consistent with the glory of his wisdom, for him to bring about a thing with so much difficulty, and with such displays of his vindictive justice, in punishing one who never offended him, if he could have answered the great end hereof on easier terms or have brought about the work of our salvation without it; neither does it consist with his goodness to inflict punishment, where it is not absolutely necessary, since, agreeably to this perfection, he delights rather to extend compassion, than to display his vindictive justice, if it might be avoided. Accordingly he is described, in scripture, (speaking after the manner of men) as punishing sin with a kind of regret, or reluctancy, Hosea. xi. 8. Thus it is said to be *his strange work*, Isa. xxviii. 21. and that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. iii. 33. but on the

other hand, *delighteth in mercy*, Micah vii. 18. Therefore if he could, consistently with his perfections, have pardoned sin without satisfaction, he could not have commanded the sword of his vindictive justice to *arise against the man that is his fellow*, Zech. xiii. 7. as an expedient to bring about an end, that might have been attained without it.

Moreover, if God could have pardoned sin without satisfaction, then his giving his own Son to perform it for us, would not have been such a wonderful instance of divine grace, as it is represented to be in scripture; for it could not have been the only expedient to bring about our salvation, if satisfaction were not absolutely necessary thereunto. (a)

IV. We are now to consider what kind of satisfaction God demanded, for the expiating of sin. There are many who do not pretend, in all respects, to deny the necessity of satisfaction; but, when they explain what they mean by it, it amounts to little more than a denial thereof: Thus the heathen, who had learned, by tradition that sacrifices were to be offered, to make atonement for sin, concluded that these were sufficient to satisfy for it, and thereby to deliver from the guilt thereof. And some of the Jews, in a degenerate age of the church, seemed to have nothing else in view, and to have no regard to the spiritual meaning thereof, or their reference to Christ's satisfaction, as types of it, when they rested in them, as supposing, that the multitude of their sacrifices were sufficient to satisfy for those vile abominations, which they were guilty of; upon which occasion, God expresses the greatest dislike thereof, when he says, *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or of lambs or of he-goats*, Isa. i. 11. And elsewhere he tells them, *I spake not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices*, Jer. vii. 22. He does not mean that these were not instituted by him; but it is as though he had said, I did not hereby intend that they should be reckoned a sufficient price to satisfy my justice for sin. And, to fence against this supposition, the apostle says, that *it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*, Heb. x. 4. for they were far from being a sufficient price to satisfy God.

Moreover, the Papists speak much of human satisfactions, consisting in various penances, fastings, leading a mortified life, parting with their estates, and submitting to voluntary poverty, with a design to make atonement for sin. The main foundation of this opinion, is their supposing, that, whatever satisfaction God demands for sin, it is the result of his will, and

(a) All the reasons upon which pardons are granted in human governments fail in the Divine.

therefore he might accept of the smallest instance of obedience and suffering, as sufficient to compensate for it, because he has deemed it so; and therefore they distinguish between giving satisfaction to God and to his justice. God, say they, may accept of, or be satisfied with the smallest price, instead of that which is most valuable; whereas nothing can, properly speaking, be said to satisfy justice, but that which has in it a value in proportion to what is purchased thereby. As to the former branch of this distinction, we deny that God can accept of any thing as a price of redemption, but what has a tendency to secure the glory of his perfections, and that, nothing less than an infinite price, can do, and therefore the distinction is vain, and nothing to their purpose; or, if they suppose that God can be satisfied with what justice does not conclude sufficient, then it is blasphemous, and derogatory to the divine perfections. Therefore we can allow of no satisfaction, but what tends to set forth the glory, and fulfil the demands of divine justice; (a) accord-

(a) "The scripture insists on full atonement, and yet every where holds up the deliverance of sinners as an act of pure grace. This is a gordian knot in divinity. Let us not by violence cut it asunder, but attempt fairly to untie it.

Before we proceed, it may not be improper to observe, that the greatest difficulty with which this part of the subject is embarrassed, appears to have originated in the want of an accurate definition of justice and grace. Theologians have said much about these, yet few have defined them with sufficient accuracy to render them intelligible, or make them appear consistent. I shall therefore,

*First*, explain the meaning of the word grace.

*Secondly*, the meaning of the word justice.

*Thirdly*, apply these explanations to this part of the subject, with a view to solve the difficulty with which it is embarrassed.

*First*. What are we to understand by the word grace?

We are to understand by it the exercise of favour, and consequently the bestowment of good where evil is deserved, and may in justice be inflicted. Where there is no exposure to evil, there is no room for the exercise of grace. He who is not guilty is not a subject of pardon. He who does not deserve punishment cannot be said to be freed from it by an act of favour. Grace therefore always implies, that the subject of it is unworthy, and would have no reason to complain, if all the evil to which he is exposed were inflicted on him. Grace will appear great according to the view which the sinner has of his own ill desert, and the consciousness he possesses of the punishment or evil from which he is delivered. Grace and justice are opposite in their nature. Grace gives; justice demands. Their provinces are entirely separate. Though they are united, yet they are not blended in man's salvation. Hence that remarkable passage in Rom. xi. 6; "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work."

*Secondly*. What are we to understand by the word justice? It assumes three denominations;—commutative, distributive, and public.

1. Commutative justice respects property only.\* "It consists in an equal exchange of benefits," or in restoring to every man his own.

2. Distributive justice respects the moral character of men. It respects them as accountable creatures, obedient or disobedient. It consists in ascertaining their virtue and sin, and in bestowing just rewards, or inflicting just punishments.

3. Public or general justice, respects what is fit or right, as to the character

\* See Doddridge's Lectures, p. 190; and also Dr. Edwards' third sermon, preached at New Haven, 1735.



ingly, we are to consider, that the satisfaction which was demanded by the justice of God, for the expiation of sin, must contain in it two things; namely,

of God, and the good of the universe. In this sense, justice comprises all moral goodness, and properly means the righteousness or rectitude of God, by which all his actions are guided, with a supreme regard to the greatest good. Justice, considered in this view, forbids that any thing should take place in the great plan of God, which would tarnish his glory, or subvert the authority of his law.

*Thirdly.* Let us now apply these explanations to the solution of the difficulty under consideration.

1. Did Christ satisfy commutative justice? Certainly not. Commutative justice has no concern in his sufferings. Men had taken no property from God, and consequently were under no obligation to restore any. But do not the scriptures represent Christ as giving himself a ransom, and as buying his people with a price? They do. They also represent men, while under the influence of sin, as prisoners, slaves, captives. These expressions are all figurative, borrowed from sensible to express moral or spiritual things, and therefore are not to be explained as if literally true. If we say that Christ hath redeemed us, that he has bought us, that he has paid the debt and discharged us—if we have any consistent meaning, it must be this: That in consequence of what Christ has done, we are delivered from sin, in as great a consistency with justice, as a debtor is delivered from his obligation, or the demands of law, when his debt is paid. That is, God extends pardon in such a way, through Christ, that he does not injure the authority of his law, but supports it as effectually as if he inflicted punishment.

2. Did Christ satisfy distributive justice? Certainly not. Distributive justice respects personal character only. It condemns men because they are sinners, and rewards them because they are righteous. Their good or ill desert are the only ground on which distributive or moral justice respects them. But good and ill desert are personal. They imply consciousness of praise or blame, and cannot be transferred or altered so as to render the subjects of them more or less worthy. What Christ did, therefore, did not take ill desert from men, nor did it place them in such a situation that God would act unjustly to punish them according to their deeds. If a man has sinned, it will always remain a truth that he has sinned, and that according to distributive justice he deserves punishment. In this sense justice admits the condemnation of Paul as much as it does of Judas. The salvation of the former is secured, and his condemnation rendered impossible by another consideration.

3. Did Christ satisfy public justice? Undoubtedly he did. This is evident from what has already been advanced respecting the necessity of atonement, in order to a consistent exercise of mercy. Christ's sufferings rendered it right and fit, with respect to God's character and the good of the universe, to forgive sin. The atonement made by Christ presented the law, the nature of sin, and the displeasure of God against it, in such a light, that no injury would accrue to the moral system, no imputation would be against the righteousness of the great Legislator, though he should forgive the sinner, and instate him in eternal felicity. Perfect justice therefore is done to the universe, though all transgressors be not punished according to their personal demerit. The death of Christ therefore is to be considered as a great, important, and public transaction, respecting God and the whole system of rational beings. Public justice requires, that neither any of these be injured, nor the character and government of the great Legislator disrespected, by the pardon of any. In these respects public justice is perfectly satisfied by the death of Christ. This is evident from the following passages of scripture. Rom. iii. 21; "But now the righteousness (rectitude or justice) of God is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Before the introduction of these words, the apostle had demonstrated, that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, were all under sin and condemnation. "Now," says he, "we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world become guilty be-

1. It must be of infinite value, otherwise it would not be sufficient to compensate for the injuries offered to the divine name by sin, which is objectively infinite, and therefore deserves a

fore God." All, if treated according to distributive justice, must be found guilty and condemned. "Therefore," says Paul, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." How, then, it might be inquired, can any be justified, and yet God not give up his law, but appear perfectly righteous and just? The answer follows. "By the righteousness of God, which is manifested without the law, being witnessed by the law." Rom. iii. 21. That is, the righteousness or justice of God, with respect to himself and the universe, is clearly manifested, though he do not execute the law, as to distributive justice, on transgressors, but pardon and save them. This is so far from being contrary to the law, that it is witnessed by the law. For the sufferings of Christ demonstrate, that God no more gives up the penalty of the law, than if he should inflict it on the original transgressor. The righteousness or justice manifested in this way is through Christ; "whom," says Paul, "God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." For what end? "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins." "To declare at this time his righteousness (for this purpose) that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 25, 26. Hence it is said, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. That is, the end of the law is as fully answered in the salvation of men by Christ, as it would have been if they had never transgressed, but had obtained life by perfect obedience. It is said, "If we confess our sins, he is just to forgive us our sins," 1 John i. 9. He is just to himself, to his law, to the universe. God styles himself "a just God, and a Saviour." Is. xlv. 21. Hence justice and mercy harmonize in man's salvation.

From the preceding statement of the nature of grace and justice, it appears,

*First*, That atonement, and consequently the pardon of sin, have no respect to commutative justice.

*Secondly*, That the sufferings of Christ did not satisfy distributive justice, since that respects personal character only; and therefore, with respect to distributive justice, salvation is an act of perfect grace.

*Thirdly*, That Christ's sufferings satisfied public justice; and therefore, with respect to public justice, salvation is an act of perfect justice.

Thus the seeming inconsistency between full atonement for sin, and pure grace in salvation, vanishes and disappears. The system of redemption rises into view like a magnificent edifice, displaying the greatest order, proportion and beauty."

DR. MACY.

"To reconcile grace with justice in the salvation of the sinner, is the Gordian knot, which divines generally have been unable to untie. Upon the principle of an indefinite atonement, the difficulty vanishes. If all the sins of a certain individual have been atoned for by the Redeemer, free grace will not appear in his pardon; because justice would, in that case, require his salvation. But justice is threefold, *commutative, distributive, and public*. Commutative justice has no concern in this case. Public justice is satisfied by the atonement, because the governor of the universe displays his displeasure at *sin in general* in the sufferings of Christ. The exercise of distributive justice is entirely set aside, and herein is grace exhibited, the sinner is pardoned at the expence of distributive justice."

"Although we have stated this argument with all the precision of which we are capable, we must observe, that notwithstanding the show of minute discussion which it makes, its whole force consists in its obscurity, and the confusion of ideas which it produces. The indistinctness of vision which it causes, is the only reason for any man's offering his hand to those who, by proposing it, promise to be his guide to the temple of truth.

We object to this division of a divine attribute—we object to the use which is made of it—we object to the argument, because it multiplies, instead of solving

punishment proportioned to it, and consequently the price demanded to satisfy for it, must be of equal value. The justice of God would cast the utmost contempt on any thing that falls

difficulties—and it takes for granted, what does not exist, a difficulty in reconciling justice with grace.

We object to this division of a divine attribute. It is not correct, even as it applies to man. We are perfectly aware that the *Schoolmen*, following the steps of heathen philosophers, adopted this division. *Suarez* builds upon it the doctrine of merit, in order to supply the traffic of indulgences with works of supererogation.\* But, however variously divine justice may be exercised about its several objects, we have no reason to believe, that there are three different attributes of justice, or even that the principle in man, which induces him to act honestly in commercial transactions, and to give to every man his due, is any way different from the principle which influences a good magistrate to conduct with equity his public administration. It is one principle exercised upon various objects. The Scriptures, which uniformly ascribe righteousness to Jehovah, and afford instances of its exercise in *thrice three* various ways, never intimate that there are *three distinct* attributes of divine justice.†

We object to the use that is made of this division. There is no reason for excluding *commutative* justice any more than distributive, as distinct from *public* justice, from having any reference to the case of the sinner's pardon. We can readily conceive of a civil ruler, having, independently of his official duties, certain private and personal duties to discharge towards those, who, in such case, are upon terms of equality with himself. But no equality exists between the creature and Creator. The pardon of sin most assuredly approaches as near to the forgiveness of a *debt* as the remission of a *personal offence*, which has no reference to the divine authority. *Sin is a want of conformity unto, or a transgression of the LAW.*‡ Besides, the Scriptures frequently represent Jehovah condescending to act towards men upon the footing of a previously existing contract or covenant, but never upon the footing of private relation, setting aside his authority. He hath taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts;" but never to say, "pardon private offences which are no transgression of thy law." We cannot even conceive of the exercise of distributive justice by the Lord, separate from his authority as our king, our lawgiver, and our judge. We cannot conceive, that it is matter of indifference whether God does or does not exercise distributive justice towards his creatures; and much less can we admit that even, for the sake of mercy, he is ever guilty of one act of distributive injustice. We, therefore, object to the use which is made of this threefold division of the attribute of justice. And we also,

Object to the whole argument which it involves, because it multiplies instead of solving difficulties around the doctrine of the sinner's justification.

It requires us to believe that God has violated, or set aside the demands of distributive justice in the salvation of his chosen—that the sufferings of our Redeemer were the punishment, not of transgressions which are, in fact, committed, but of sin in the abstract—and that public justice requires only an exhibition of the divine displeasure at sin.

Sin, in the abstract, is only a word. Like an algebraical character, it represents all the transgressions of individual persons. These particular sins are realities; but sin *in general*, or in the abstract, is only the *sign*, the word, which we employ in reasoning.§ It is not for the *sign*, but the thing that Jesus suffered.

\* See Owen on Jus. chap. ii.

† "Were this the proper place, it would be easy to show, by a criticism on the best writers upon this subject, that their definitions of commutative, distributive, and public justice, interfere, and are otherwise essentially incorrect."

‡ Shorter Catechism.

§ "Did we deem it eligible to introduce metaphysics into this discussion, we could more effectually expose the idea of punishing a *nonentity*—*sin* in the abstract." We are no conceptualists; and the controversy between the Nominalists and Realists is now at an end. It prevailed long enough. It agitated the European universities, interested thrones, and shed much precious blood. No philosopher will now defend the opinions of the Realists. Abstract terms have no counterpart in nature. Stew. Phil. Mind. ch. iv. § 2, & 3."



short hereof : thus the prophet represents one, as making a very large overture, which one would think sufficient, if a finite price were so, when he speaks, in a beautiful climax, or gradation, of coming before the Lord *with burnt-offerings*, and these well

The word sin, too, represents the transgressions of angels. If the Redeemer suffered for sin in general, he made atonement for devils, although he took not on him the nature of angels. And if public justice demanded no more than the display of Jehovah's hatred of sin, then Christ is dead in vain, for such display is made in the everlasting punishments of Hell. But justice demanded more. It demanded the punishment of the sinner; and could not be satisfied with any thing short of this, unless Messiah should so unite himself to sinners, not only by assuming their nature, but by becoming in law their representative, as to bear all the sins of all the persons for whom his sufferings were intended to atone. We object also to this argument in defence of indefinite atonement,

Because it takes for granted, what does not exist, that if all the demands of divine justice are satisfied to the full by the atonement, then grace is excluded from our pardon. This is not the case. Justice is indeed satisfied. It does not oppose, but demand the salvation of all for whom Christ died. Here is no difficulty—no Gordian knot. Grace reigns through righteousness. We refer our readers to what is said on this subject, page 377, and conclude our examination of this argument in the words of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. “Al-  
“ though Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full  
“ satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet, inas-  
“ much as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have  
“ demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only son, imputing his  
“ righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification, but  
“ faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.”

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Atonement imports reconciliation, a being *at one*. The Hebrew signifies to *cover*. The Greek word denotes a *commutation*, as of enmity for friendship. But we use atonement for *ransom*, or *price*, and we never pray for it. Redemption imports a deliverance. To say that the ransom was paid *indefinitely*, that is, not more for one than another, is plainly contrary to his views, who spoke of those who were *given to him*, and of his *laying down his life for his sheep*. His sacrifice was real, and its object could not be *sin in general*, a mere abstract term; a sacrifice of which Satan might avail himself, as well as man. If the atonement, and redemption be indefinite, so were the decrees or purposes, the suretyship of Christ, the foreknowledge of God, and the promotion of the glory of God in the work.

On the other hand, to represent these transactions, so strictly as matters of debt, and credit, as that the quantum of price was exactly commensurate to the guilt of the saved, and neither more nor less, is not warranted by the word of God. This is to impute the cause of damnation to Christ's not having died for those who perish; and not to their guilt. Both these conclusions are erroneous. Christ died for *all men*, and *every man*, not in the sense of the universalists, not in the same sense as he died for his sheep; but that his sacrifice is sufficient for all; and God the Father, whose mercy can reach no fallen creature, but in Christ, has authorized the offer of covenant mercy to all; and desires the destruction of none. Thus men perish only by their sins. The Sacrifice of Christ is of infinite value, for he is a Divine person; and the sins of all men can be no more than infinite.

The truth seems to be, that the sacrifice is infinite; that the offer is to be general; that man perishes by his own fault only; and all this is according to the eternal purposes of God. Nevertheless the salvation of the saints was certain; the price particularly paid with a view to them; who are eventually effectually called, justified, sanctified, and brought to glory.

chosen, *calves of a year old*, and a multitude of them; *Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams*, a price which very few were able to give, *or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?* in which he offers more than it was possible to give; then he ascends yet higher, and, if it were sufficient, would part with *his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of his body, for the sin of his soul*; all which is reckoned an inconsiderable price, not sufficient to procure the thing designed thereby; and therefore he that offers it, is advised instead of pretending to satisfy divine justice by a finite price, *to walk humbly with his God*, Micah vi. 7, 8. and, whatever obedience he is obliged to perform, not to have the vanity to think that this is a sufficient price to answer that end.

2. Satisfaction must bear some similitude, or resemblance, as to the matter of it, to that debt which was due from those for whom it was to be given. Here we must consider what was the debt due from us, for which a demand of satisfaction was made; this was twofold.

1st, A debt of perfect and sinless obedience, whereby the glory of God's sovereignty might be secured, and the honour of his law maintained. This debt it was morally impossible for man to pay, after his fall; for it implies a contradiction to say that a fallen creature can yield sinless obedience; nevertheless, it was demanded of us, though fallen; for the obligation could not be disannulled by our disability to perform it.

2dly, There was a debt of punishment, which we were liable to, in proportion to the demerit of sin, as the result of the condemning sentence of the law, which threatened death for every transgression and disobedience. Now, to be satisfaction to the justice of God, it must have these ingredients in it.

As to the infinite value of the price that was given, this is contested by none, but those who deny the divinity of Christ; and these arguments that have been brought in defence of that doctrine; and others, by which we have proved the necessity that our Mediator should be God, render it less needful for us, at present, to enlarge on this subject.\* But there are many, who do not deny the necessity of an infinite satisfaction, who will not allow that it is necessary that there should be a resemblance between the debt contracted, and satisfaction given; and, by these, it is objected,

*Obje.* 1. That the least instance of obedience, or one drop of Christ's blood, was a sufficient price to satisfy divine justice; in defence of which they argue, that these must be supposed to have had in them an infinite value; but nothing can be greater than what is infinite, and therefore that one single act of obedience was sufficient to redeem the whole world of

\* See *Quest. XXXVIII.*

fallen men, or the whole number of fallen angels, if God had pleased to order it so.

*Ans.* Though we do not deny that the least instance of obedience, or sufferings performed by our Saviour, would have been of infinite value, inasmuch as we do not conclude the infinity of obedience to consist in a multitude of acts, or in its being perfectly sinless; nor do we deem his sufferings infinite, merely because they were exquisite, or greater than what mankind are generally liable to in this world, but because they were the obedience and suffering of a divine Person; neither do we deny, that, according to the same method of reasoning, the least act of obedience and suffering, performed by him, would have been infinite. Nevertheless, it does not follow from hence, that this would have been a sufficient price of redemption; for the sufficiency of the price does not only rise from the infinite value thereof, but from God's will to accept of it; and he could not be willing to accept of any price, but what had a tendency to illustrate and set forth the glory of his holiness, as a sin-hating God, and of his sovereignty in the government of the world, in such a way, that the most fit means might be used to prevent the commission of it, and of his truth, in fulfilling the threatnings denounced, which man was exposed to, by his violating the law. Now these ends could not be answered by one single instance of obedience, or suffering, and therefore God could not deem them sufficient; and it is plain that he did not, for, if he had, he would not have delivered our Saviour to suffer all that he did; concerning whom it is said, *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, Rom. viii. 32.

Moreover, it was necessary that redemption should be brought about in such a way, as would lay the sinner under the highest obligation to admire the love, both of the Father and the Son. Now, if Christ had performed only one act of obedience, or suffered in the least degree, this instance of condescension, though infinite, would not have had so great a tendency to answer this end; nor could it have been said, as it is, with a great emphasis of expression, that *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*, Rom. v. 8.

*Object. 2.* It is objected, by others, that Christ's active obedience was no part of the satisfaction which he gave for us, inasmuch as this was a debt due from him for himself, his human nature (in which alone he could yield obedience) being under a natural obligation to perform it; therefore he could not be said to pay that debt for us, which was due for himself. As for his passive obedience, that, indeed, might be performed for us, because, being an innocent person, he was not under any obligation to suffer, but by his own consent; but this cannot be



said of his active obedience. And it is farther objected, that if he had performed active obedience for us, this would have exempted us from an obligation to yield obedience ourselves, and consequently this doctrine leads to licentiousness.

*Answer.* We allow that Christ as Man, was obliged to perform obedience, as a debt due from him, as a creature, and consequently, now he is in heaven, he is under the same obligation; though this has no reference to the work of our redemption, which was finished before he went thither: nevertheless, the obedience he performed before his death, might be deemed a part of that satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God for us; for,

(1.) His being under the law, was the result of his own voluntary consent, inasmuch as his incarnation, which was necessary, to his becoming a subject, was the result of the consent of his divine will. Now, if he came into the world, and thereby put himself into a capacity of yielding obedience by his own consent, which no other person ever did, then his obedience, which was the consequence hereof, might be said to be voluntary, and so deemed a part of the satisfaction which he gave to the justice of God in our behalf.

(2.) Though we do not deny that Christ's active obedience was a debt due to God for himself, yet it does not follow, from hence, that it may not be imputed to us, nor accepted for us; even as that perfect obedience which was to have been performed by Adam, according to the tenor of the first covenant, though it were to have been imputed to all his posterity, was, nevertheless, primarily due from him for himself.

(3.) As to that part of the objection, in which it is supposed, that Christ's obedience for us, would exempt us from an obligation to yield obedience, this is generally brought, by those who desire to render this doctrine odious, and take no notice of what we say in explaining our sense thereof. Therefore, in answer to it, let it be considered, that, when we say Christ obeyed for us, we do not suppose, that he designed hereby to exempt us from any obligation to yield obedience to God's commanding will, but only to exempt us from performing it with the same view that he did. We are not hereby excused from yielding obedience to God, as a Sovereign, but from doing it with a view of meriting hereby, or making atonement for our defect of obedience, which was the result of our fallen state; and therefore we are to say, *When we have done all, we are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do*, Luke xvii. 10. without considering it as that righteousness, by which we are to be justified in the sight of God. We understand our obligation to yield active obedience, in the same sense, as we are obliged patiently to suffer whatever afflictions

God is pleased to lay on us, from which we are not exempted by Christ's sufferings: the only difference between them is, that his sufferings were penal and satisfactory; he suffered for us, that hereby he might purchase for us eternal life, which is not the end of a believer's suffering; therefore, why may it not be allowed, that Christ might perform obedience for us, and we, at the same time, not be excused from it?

*Object. 3.* As to what concerns the sufferings of Christ, it is objected, by others, that the whole of his passive obedience was not demanded as a price of redemption for us but only what he endured upon the cross, which was the greatest and most formidable part of his sufferings; and particularly those which he endured from the *sixth to the ninth hour*, while there was *darkness over all the land*, in which his soul was afflicted in an extraordinary manner, which occasioned him to cry, (Matt. xxvii. 45, 46.) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*\* As for his other sufferings, endured in the whole course of his life, these are allowed to have been a convincing evidence of his love to us, and designed, as an example, to induce us to bear afflictions with patience; but that it was only his sufferings upon the cross that were satisfactory, and that was the altar on which he offered himself for us; which appears from those scriptures which speak of our redemption and justification, as the effect of his crucifixion and death, rather than of his sufferings in life.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that, though redemption and salvation be often attributed, in scripture, to Christ's death, or to his shedding his blood upon the cross for us, yet there is, in all of them, a figurative way of speaking, in which, by a Synecdoche, a part is taken for the whole; therefore his sufferings in his life, though not particularly mentioned therein, are not excluded. There is one scripture, in which, by the same figurative way of speaking, our justification is ascribed to Christ's active obedience, when it is said, *By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. in which, though his passive obedience be not mentioned, it is not excluded; therefore, when we read of Christ's sufferings on the cross, as being a part of his satisfaction, we are not to suppose that his sufferings in life are excluded. The apostle plainly intimates as much, when he says, *He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*, Phil. ii. 8. he humbled himself not only in his death, but in all the sufferings he endured unto it, in the whole course of his life; therefore we must conclude, that what he endured in his infancy, and that poverty, temptation, reproach, and contradiction of sinners against him-

\* These, which are styled, *Passiones trihoriarum, ultimæ*, are generally called, *Pænæ satisfactoriæ*; and all his sufferings before them, *Pænæ convincentes*.

self, and all the other miseries which he underwent, during the whole course of his life, which were a part of that curse which was due to us for sin, were submitted to by him to expiate it, and consequently were a part of that satisfaction.

As for the cross's being styled, as it is by some ancient and modern writers, the altar, on which Christ offered himself, we think that little more than a strain of rhetoric; or, if it be designed to illustrate the opinion we are now opposing, we deny that it ought to be called the altar; for it is no where so styled in scripture, neither have we ground to conclude, that the altar, upon which the sacrifices under the law were offered, was a type of Christ's cross in particular; and, indeed, we have a better explication of the spiritual meaning thereof, given by Christ himself, when he speaks of the *altar*, as *sanctifying the gift*, Matt. xxiii. 19. alluding to what is said concerning its being *most holy, and whatsoever touched it, shall be holy*, Exod. xxix. 37. from whence it is inferred, that the altar was more holy than the gift, which was laid upon it, and it signifies, that the altar, on which Christ was offered, added an excellency to his offering; whereas nothing could be said to do so, but his divine nature's being personally united to his human, which rendered it infinitely valuable. This is therefore, the altar on which Christ was offered; or, at least this is that which sanctified the offering, and not the cross on which he suffered \*.

V. We shall now prove, that what Christ did and suffered, was with a design to give satisfaction to the justice of God; and, that what he offered, was a true and proper sacrifice for sin. All allow, that Christ obeyed and suffered; and even the Socinians themselves will not deny that Christ suffered for us, since this is so plainly contained in scripture: But the main stress of the controversy lies in this; whether Christ died merely for our good, namely, that we might be hereby induced to believe the truth of the doctrines he delivered, as he confirmed them, by shedding his blood, or that he might give us an example of patience and holy fortitude under the various evils we are exposed to, either in life or death? This is the sense in which they understand Christ's dying for us: But there is a great deal more intended hereby, to wit, that he died in our room and stead, or that he bore that for us, which the justice of God demanded as a debt first due from us, as an expedient for his taking away the guilt of sin, and delivering us from his wrath, which we were liable to. This will appear, if we consider,

1. That he is, for this reason, styled our Redeemer, as hav-

\* It is an abominable strain of blasphemy, which some Popish writers make use of, when they say that not only the cross was the altar, but that it was sacred, and had a virtue to sanctify the gift offered thereon, which is the foundation of that idolatrous adoration which they give to it.



ing purchased us hereby, or delivered, us, in a judicial way, out of the hand of vindictive justice, which is the most proper, if not the only sense of the word *redemption*. The Socinians, indeed, speak of Christ as a redeemer; but they understand the word in a metaphorical sense, as importing his delivering us from some evils, that we were exposed to; not by paying a price of redemption for us, but by revealing those laws, or doctrines, which had a tendency to reform the world, or laying down some rules to direct the conversation of mankind, and remove some prejudices they had entertained; whereas we assert, that herein he dealt with the justice of God, as offering himself a sacrifice for sin.

This appears from those scriptures that speak of his *soul*, as made an *offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10. or his being *set forth to be a propitiation, to declare the righteousness of God for the remission of sins*, Rom. iii. 25. in which respect, he answered the types thereof under the law, in which atonement is said to be made by sacrifice, which, being an act of worship, was performed to God alone, whereby sin was typically expiated, and the sinner discharged from the guilt, which he was liable to; and, in this respect Christ is said, as the Anti-type thereof, to have *offered himself without spot to God*, when he shed his blood for us, or to have *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, Heb. ix. 26. and to have *given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour*.

Moreover, what he did and suffered, is styled a *ransom*, or price of redemption; and accordingly they, who were concerned therein, are said to be *bought with a price*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. and he saith, concerning himself, that *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many*, Matt. xx. 28. We read, in scripture, of a person's paying a sum of money, as a *ransom for his life*, when it was forfeited, by his having been the culpable occasion of the death of another, Exod. xxi. 29, 30. and if such a consideration, when exacted as a price of redemption, be styled a ransom, a person's laying down his life for another, may, with equal propriety, be so called. And this Christ is said, in many scriptures, to have done for us; upon which account he is styled our Redeemer.

*Object.* We oftentimes read, in scripture, of redemption, where there is no price paid: Thus Israel is said to be *redeemed out of Egypt*, Deut. vii. 8. and *Babylon*, Micah iv. 10. And elsewhere, speaking of their deliverance out of captivity, God saith, *I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible*, Jer. xv. 21. whereas there was no price of redemption paid for their deliverance, either out of Egypt or Babylon, but it was by the immediate power of God. So Jacob, when he speaks of his deliverance from evil by the angel, styles this, his *redemption from*

*all evil*, Gen. xlviii. 16. Now, though we allow that the angel he there speaks of, was our Lord Jesus Christ; yet the deliverance he wrought for Jacob was not by paying a price for him, but by exerting his divine power in order thereto.

Moreover, others are called redeemers, who have been God's ministers in delivering his people: Thus Moses is called a *ruler and deliverer by the hands of the angel, which appeared to him in the bush*, Acts vii. 35. so our translators rendered it\*: but it ought to be rendered a *Redeemer*; therefore there may be redemption without satisfaction.

*Ans.* This objection, how plausible soever it may seem to be, is not unanswerable; and the reply which may be given to it, is, that though deliverance from evil may be styled *redemption*, as it is oftentimes in scripture: the reason of its being so called, is, because of the reference which it has to that ransom that Christ was, after his incarnation, to pay for his people. This was the foundation of all that discriminating grace that God, in former ages, extended to his people. It was on the account hereof that he did not suffer them to perish in Egypt, or Babylon, and accordingly their deliverance is called a *redemption*, from thence; whereas, we never find that any deliverance, which God wrought for his enemies, who have no concern in Christ's redemption, is so called.

And whereas Moses is styled, in that scripture but now referred to, a *Redeemer*, the deliverance he wrought for them, as an instrument made use of by the angel that appeared to him, may, without any impropriety of expression, be called a redemption, and he a redeemer, inasmuch as that deliverance that Christ wrought by him, was founded on the purchase which he designed to pay, otherwise Moses, would not have been so styled.

2. There are many scriptures that speak of Christ's obedience and sufferings, as being in our room and stead, whereby he performed what was due from us to the justice of God which is the proper notion of satisfaction. Thus we are to understand those expressions, in which he is said to *die for us*, as the apostle says; *In due time Christ died for the ungodly, and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*, Rom. v. 6, 8. by which we are to understand, that he endured those sufferings in life and death which we are liable to, with a design to procure for us justification, reconciliation to God, and eternal salvation, and herein he was substituted in our room and stead, as well as died for our good. †.

\* ΛΥΤΡΩΤΗΝ.

† There are several propositions used, in the New Testament, in explaining this doctrine, namely, *δια, περ, υπερ, and αντι*; *δια* and *περ* refer to the occasion and cause of Christ's death, to wit, our sins: Thus it is said, in Rom. iv. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, *Ος παρδωκεν δια τα παρπηματα ημων*; and, in 1 Pet. iii. 18.

That Christ died, in this sense, for his people, farther appears, from his being therein said to bear their sins, as the apostle expresses it, *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. and elsewhere it is said, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of my people was he stricken*, Isa. liii. 5—8. all which expressions plainly denote that he suffered that which was due to them, or that he died in their room and stead.

And this he is farther said to do, in a sense, in which none but he ever died for any other, and therefore much more must be understood by it, than his dying for the good of mankind. The apostle speaking of this matter, opposes Christ's sufferings to his own, with respect to the end and design thereof, when he saith; *Was Paul crucified for you*, 1 Cor. i. 13. which is as though he should say, it is true, I have suffered many things for the church's advantage: yet it would be a vile thing for you to entertain the least surmise, as though my suffering were endured with the same view that Christ suffered; for he died as a sacrifice for sin, that he might give a price of redemption to the justice of God, which no one else ever did.

*Object.* 1. It is objected, to what hath been said in defence of Christ's dying in our room and stead, inasmuch as he bare our iniquities, that these expressions denote nothing else but his taking them away, which he might do, if he had not died in our room and stead. Thus we have an explication of that scripture before mentioned, which speaks of Christ's bearing our iniquities, wherein it appears that nothing is intended thereby but his taking away some afflictions we were liable to; as it

Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *Περί αμαρτιῶν ἡμεῶν*; and, in this case, his substitution in our room and stead is principally argued, from its being for our sins, for which death was due. As for *ὑπέρ*, whenever it refers to Christ's sufferings, it plainly signifies his being substituted in our room and stead; as in Rom. v. 6. Christ died *ὑπὲρ ἁσέλων*, for the ungodly; and, in Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, *Ὁς ἑαυτὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*. And this is not only used in the New Testament to signify the substitution of the person dying in the room of another, or, in other instances, acting in his stead; as in 2 Cor. v. 20. Phil. ver. 13. but it is taken in the same sense when used in other writers, Vid. Euripid in *Alcest*, *μὴ θύνοχ' ὑπὲρ τῆς δ' ἀνδρὸς*; and Demosth. in *Coron.* *ἐγὼ τὸ ὑπὲρ σε πίνω*; and the Latin word, that answers to it, is sometimes used in the same sense. Vid. Ter. in *Andr.* *Ego pro te molam*. As for the preposition *ἀντὶ*, that is seldom or never used, but it signifies a substitution of one thing, or person, in the room of another: Thus when Christ is said to give his life a ransom, *ἀντὶ πολλῶν* for many, in Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 46. this plainly imports his being substituted in their room, as appears by the frequent use thereof in other scriptures. See Matt. ii. 22. chap. v. 38. and chap. xvii. 27. Luke xi. 11. and in several other places, Vid. *Grot. de Satisfact. Christ.* cap. 9.



is said, upon the occasion of his *casting out devils, and healing all that were sick*, that this was done *that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*, Mat. viii. 16, 17. which he might be said to do, without his dying to satisfy the justice of God for us in our room and stead.

*Ans. w.* There are two things to be considered in the death of Christ, which, though distinct, are not to be separated; one is, his bearing those griefs, sorrows, or punishments, that were due to us for sin; the other is, his taking them away, as the effect and consequence of his having born or answered for them; and the design of the prophet Isaiah, in his liii. chapter, is to shew that Christ did both these, as appears by several expressions therein; accordingly when he is said, in ver. 4. *To have borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, both these senses are to be applied to it; one of which is explained by the apostle, in 1 Pet. ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*; and the evangelist, in the text under our present consideration explains these words of the prophet in both senses, when he saith, *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses*, that is, he submitted to give satisfaction for them, and, as the consequence thereof, healed those diseases which we were liable to, as the fruit of sin. The objection therefore taken from this scripture, against the doctrine we are maintaining, is of no force; for though Christ took away those miseries, which were the effects and consequences of sin, it doth not follow that he did not do this, by making satisfaction for it.

*Object. 2.* There are other ends of Christ's dying for us, mentioned in scripture, where though the same mode of speaking be used, different ends are said to be attained thereby, from that of his giving satisfaction to the justice of God: Thus it is said, that *he gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from this present evil world*, Gal. i. 4. *that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14. and that he might hereby *leave us an example that we should follow his steps*, 1. Pet. ii. 21. and that he might acquire to himself some additional circumstances of glory, thus it is said, *He died, and rose and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. These, and such-like ends, are said to be attained by Christ's death, which do not argue that he died in our stead, but only for our advantage.

And to this it may be added, that others are represented as suffering for the church, as well as Christ, namely, for their good, where there is no difference, in the mode of speaking, from that other scripture, in which Christ is said to die for us. Thus the apostle saith, *I rejoice in my sufferings for you*, Col. i. 24. and this he explains elsewhere, when he speaks of his

being afflicted for the church's *consolation and salvation*, 2 Cor. i. 6.

*Ans.* We do not deny but that there are other ends designed by Christ's sufferings and death, besides his giving satisfaction to divine justice, which are the result and consequence thereof; therefore we must consider him as dying in our stead, and then the fruits and effects, which redound to our advantage; one is so far from being inconsistent with the other, that it is necessary to it; and, in some of the scriptures but now mentioned, both these ends are expressed, the former being the ground and reason of the latter; as when it is said, *He gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world*: the meaning is, he first made satisfaction for sin, and then, as the consequence thereof, in the application of redemption, he designed to deliver us from the evils we are exposed to in this world; and when, in another scripture before-mentioned, the apostle speaks of *Christ's purifying unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, he mentions this not as the chief, much less as the only design of his giving himself for his people; but it is said, he did this first, *that he might redeem them from all iniquity*, namely, by giving a satisfaction to justice for them, and then, that having redeemed, he might purify them to himself; and when it is said, *that he died, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living*, the meaning is, that he might purchase that dominion which he hath over them as Mediator; or that having satisfied divine justice for them, as a Priest, he might, have dominion over them as a King; so that these two ends are not inconsistent with each other, and therefore the latter doth not destroy the former.

And as for that scripture, in which the apostle speaks of his sufferings for the church, or for their *consolation and salvation*, we may observe, that he doth not say that he suffered for them, much less, in their room and stead, or as a propitiation to make reconciliation, that hereby he might promote their consolation and salvation, as Christ did; much less is it said of any besides him, that *he gave his life a ransom for them*, which is an expression peculiar to himself, wherein his death is represented as a price of redemption for them \*.

3. That Christ died in our room and stead, and consequently designed hereby to give satisfaction to the justice of God for our sin, appears from his death's being typified by the sacrifices under the ceremonial law, which, it is plain, were substituted in the room of the offender, for whom they were offered. We read of *the priest's laying his hand on the head of the sacrifice, and confessing over it the iniquities of those for whom it was offered*, upon which occasion it is said to *have born them*,

\* See the note immediately preceeding.

Lev. xvi. 21, 22. And the consequence thereof was their being discharged from the guilt which they had contracted, which is called, making atonement for sin. Now that this was a type of Christ's making satisfaction for our sins, by his death, is evident, inasmuch as the apostle having spoken concerning this ceremonial ordinance, applies it to him, when he saith, that *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many*, Heb. ix. 28. And elsewhere, when referring to *the sacrifice of the Lord's passover*, as the paschal lamb was styled, Exod. xii. 27. He says that *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, 1 Cor. v. 7. And, as such, he is said *to be made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. And as they who were ordained to perform this service, are called priests, Christ, as typified thereby, is so styled.

I am sensible it will be objected, that the sacrifices under the ceremonial law were not instituted with a design to typify Christ's death; which would hardly have been asserted by any, as being so contrary to the sense of many scriptures, had it not been thought necessary to support the cause they maintain. But, having said something concerning this before, in considering the origin of the ceremonial law \*, I shall only add, that it is very absurd to suppose that God appointed sacrifices not as types of Christ, but to prevent their following the custom of the Heathen, in sacrificing to their gods, and that they did not take their rites of sacrificing from the Jews, but the Jews from them; and God, foreseeing that they would be inclined to follow their example herein, indulged them as to the matter, and only made a change with respect to the object thereof, in ordaining, that, instead of offering sacrifice to idols, they should offer it to him. But this runs counter to all the methods of providence in the government of the church, which have been so far from giving occasion to it to symbolize with the religion of the Heathen, in their external rites of worship, that God strictly forbade all commerce with them. Thus Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, an idolatrous country, to live in the land of Canaan, and there he was to be no other than a stranger, or sojourner, that he might not, by too great familiarity with the inhabitants thereof learn their ways. And afterwards the Jews were prohibited from having any dealings with the Egyptians; not because civil commerce was unlawful, but lest this should give occasion to them to imitate them in their rites of worship; to prevent which, the *multiplying horses* was forbidden, Deut. xvii. 16. upon which occasion the church saith, in Hos. xiv. 3. *We will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods*, that is, we will not do any thing that may be a temptation to us to join

\* See Page 201--202 ante.



with the Egyptians, or other Heathen nations, in their idolatry ; therefore certainly God did not ordain sacrifices in compliance with the Heathen, but to typify Christ's death.

Thus we have endeavoured to prove that Christ gave satisfaction to the justice of God for sin, as he was a true and proper sacrifice for it. I might, for the farther strengthening of this argument, have proved, that the end of Christ's death, assigned by the Socinians, namely, that he might make atonement for sin, can hardly be reckoned an expedient to confirm any doctrine ; for there are many instances of persons having laid down their lives to confirm doctrines that have been false, and nothing more is proved hereby, but that the person believes the doctrine himself, or else is under the power of delusion or distraction ; whereas a person's believing the doctrine he advances is no evidence of the truth thereof : and as for our Saviour's confirming his doctrines, that was sufficiently done by the miracles which he wrought for that end. And indeed, were this the only end of Christ's dying, I cannot see how it differs from the death of the apostles, and other martyrs, for the sake of the gospel ; whereas Christ laid down his life with other views, and for higher ends, than any other person ever suffered.

And to this we may add, that if Christ died only to confirm his doctrine, or, as it is farther alleged, by those whom we oppose, that herein he might give us an example of submission to the divine will and patience in suffering, this would have been no manner of advantage to the Old Testament saints ; for Christ could not be an example to them, nor were the doctrines, which they pretend he suffered to confirm, such as took place in their time. Therefore Christ was no Saviour to them, neither could they reap any advantage by what he was to do and suffer ; nor could they have been represented as desiring and hoping for his coming, or, as it is said of Abraham, *rejoicing to see his day*, John viii. 56. and if we suppose that they were saved, it must have been without faith in him. According to this method of reasoning, they not only militate against Christ's being a proper sacrifice ; but render his cross of none effect, at least to them that lived before his incarnation ; and his death, which was the greatest instance of love that could be expressed to the children of men, not absolutely necessary to their salvation. (a)

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(a) " The judicious, whether Trinitarians, or Unitarians, have always acknowledged an intimate connexion between the doctrine of Christ's true Godhead, and that of his satisfaction for sins ; as both must be at once confessed, or denied. If he by his sufferings could satisfy the avenging justice of God for the sins of all believers ; then he behoved to be more than any creature. If on the contrary, such a thing was not necessary, then no other end could be so important, that for it God should empty himself, and " assuming the form of a servant, become obedient to the death of the cross."

But the truth of Christ's satisfaction is confirmed in the word of God by so

*Object.* Before we close this head, we shall consider an objection generally brought against the doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, namely, that he did not undergo the punishment due

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many testimonies, and these of the clearest kind, that those of another opinion, find themselves under a necessity to give every where to these passages an arbitrary sense; so feeble, improper, and far-fetched, that by such a strain of interpretation, people are in danger of turning from all the doctrines of the Bible and of pronouncing it the most uncertain of all doctrinal books, and the most ready to mislead. On this subject much has been written. We shall only observe the following things as suitable to our purpose.

In the course of Christ's prophetic teaching upon earth, we find evident proofs, that he had appeared not only for that end, but chiefly for a very different purpose, namely, to suffer and to die; that being a saving work, and of the utmost necessity. He declared that he came to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. More than once he informed his disciples, that by a bitter and a most humbling kind of suffering, which hung over his head, that which was written concerning him, behoved to be accomplished.

His circumstances and manner of acting were wholly directed to that end. The joyful solemnizing of his birth, by a retinue of spirits immortal and enthroned, was heard by good witnesses indeed, but of low degree, and few in number; and with some express testimonies on earth, during his quiet education in a remote and contemptible town, they were almost gone out of mind. His heavenly consecration was shown to John only; his glorification on the mount, only to three of his followers, of which he forbade them to speak till after his resurrection, or to make him known every where as Christ. Several times he commanded not to propagate the cures he had wrought. Often his preaching was involved and figurative, more adapted to inflame the *great* against him, than to unite the *many* in his favours. Yet his greatness could not be wholly unknown, and when men would have exalted him, he shunned it. By all these things, the judgment and the confidence of the people concerning him, was much more vague and unstable, than even concerning his austere forerunner.—In one word, his ministry was so conducted as might best serve, not to prevent, but to pave the way for his farther suffering and death, while the clearer and more extensive spread of his doctrine, and thereby at the same time, the publication of his death and his glory, behoved to be the work of the apostles in his name.

That Christ suffered and died for the good of his church, is without controversy; so also did the apostles. But was any of them crucified for us, as was Christ? To say this, would in Paul's judgment be the utmost absurdity. What then hath the Saviour done, which no other did?—"He was delivered for our offences." "He suffered for our sin, the just for the unjust; that he might bring us to God." He "died for our sins." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."—And so indeed, that he delivered us from sin, by taking it upon himself. For he who neither had nor knew sin, was of God made to be sin for us, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. He "bare our sins in his own body upon the tree." "Behold, said John, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." And how does he *take it away*? By his death. For to say a lamb takes away sin, is not sense, if there be not an allusion to the Paschal Lamb, or to other sacrificed lambs, which were to be slain according to the law. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." "Ye are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot."—He put himself in our place, fulfilled for us the demands of God's holy law, and for us satisfied his inflexible justice. Why, pray, of all men, of all the saints, of all the most excellent teachers, was Christ only free from all moral impurity? As a Prophet, this was not absolutely necessary for him; but necessary it was that he, being to fulfil the law for others, should have no need to satisfy for his own sin. "God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and that for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." God sent forth his Son made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law."—

for our sins, because he did not suffer eternally; nor were his sufferings attended with that despair, and some other circumstances of punishment, which sinners are liable to in the other world.

The apostle confirms this in the clearest manner, giving us at the same time, a notable sign of the remarkable *curse* in the death of Christ. It is written, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree."

This important doctrine is inculcated on us in many places, under the notions of a *purchase*, a *ransom*, a *propitiation*, and a *testament*; by which the virtue and the efficacy, of Christ's death are elucidated. Let it not be objected, that these phrases are borrowed from other things, and therefore to be understood in an improper and figurative sense. A figurative sense is not however, no sense at all, or without sense; but serves to make profound subjects more comprehensible to a common understanding.

1. *A Purchase*. Believers in their soul and their body are God's, "because they are bought with a price;" they are the church of the Lord God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. The song unto the Lamb runs, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;" which strongly indicates, that their salvation is to be ascribed to the merits of his bloody death.

2. *A Ransom*. In the New Testament, the word *deliverance* is often used in translating one, which properly signifies a *redemption*, or *ransom*. Thus it is written, "ye were redeemed from your vain conversation, not by corruptible things, as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ." This redemption is explained by the forgiveness of sins. It is, therefore, his blood and death, wherewith he made payment, in order to procure our discharge from the debt of sin. He came "to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."—*λυτρον*. Matt. xx. 28. and *ανταλυτρον*. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

3. *A Propitiation*. Sometimes this in the Greek is called *αποκαταλλαγη*, (*conciliatio*) that is, a *reconciliation*. Accordingly, believers are now reconciled to God by the death of his Son; by his cross; by the blood of his cross, and in the body of his flesh through death. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;" which is farther explained, "not imputing their trespasses to them."—But it is also called a *propitiation*, in the translation of *ιλασμος*, (*expiatio*) used concerning the victims which were anciently slain, as a typical propitiation in place of the guilty. So now Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins. For God "sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." God hath set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness, by (or rather because of) the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, "the Lamb of God hath so taken away the sins of the world," that he took them upon himself, that he bare them, that he died in the place of his people.

4. *A Testament*. According to his last institution, the assignation of the everlasting inheritance, is called "the New Testament in his blood, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins." This signifies to us, not only that Christ had a perfect right to the honour of settling the inheritance, not only that his death as a testator was necessary to put his people in possession of it; but, that that inheritance had its foundation precisely in the shedding of his blood, in his deepest humiliation, and his violent death; as thereby their sins, which otherwise stood in the way of salvation, could be forgiven. If, instead of the *New Testament*, we rather choose to translate it the *New Covenant*; the allusion will be somewhat different, but the matter the same.

This leads us to the epistle to the Hebrews, in which all these doctrines are ascertained to us at great length, and with invincible arguments. That epistle was intended to demonstrate indeed, the authority of Christ's instruction above all the prophets, and even Moses himself: but also, under propositions borrowed from the ancient religion, and fitted to the Hebrews, to reconcile his priestly office with the intention of the Levitical sacrifices, and to exalt it infinitely above



*Answ.* To this it may be answered, that the infinite value of Christ's sufferings did compensate for their not being eternal. And, indeed, the eternity of sufferings is the result of their not

Aaron's priesthood. Christ being a High Priest of unchangeable power, needed not to offer up sacrifices for his own sins, but having offered himself up once to God, he thereby made reconciliation for sin, made an end of it, opened a sure way to heaven, and "can save unto the uttermost all who come unto the Father by him." Read the 5th and the 10th chapters. Would you, on account of the doctrine so full of consolation, suspect this epistle, and erase it from the volume of holy scripture? In it, however, no doctrine occurs, which is not also mentioned elsewhere; and this apostolic epistle is surpassed by none of the rest, in sublimity of matter, in weight of evidence, in glorifying the grace of God in Christ, in strong consolation, in encouraging to the spiritual warfare, and in the most animating motives to holiness and perseverance.

Besides, in the Saviour's satisfaction only lies the reason, why his suffering together with his resurrection, are every where represented to us as the sum and substance of the gospel. No other part of his history and ministration are so fully propounded, and that by all the Evangelists.—We have already seen, that the Apostles preached, not only the doctrine of evangelic morality, but chiefly Christ himself, that is, his person, work, and two-fold state. Paul would know nothing among the Corinthians, "but Jesus Christ and him crucified." The cross of Christ was that alone in which he gloried. He reduces the knowledge of Christ, for the excellency of which he counted all things but loss and dung, to the knowledge of the power of his resurrection, and of the fellowship of his sufferings.—In that most important conversation on the holy mount, between our Lord, and two of the celestial inhabitants, the two great teachers and reformers under the old dispensation, we find no more mentioned, but that it turned upon that decrease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.—In the cross, and the other humiliations and sufferings of the Saviour comprehended under it, the love of God towards men, in not sparing his own Son, as also his wisdom and power unto salvation are displayed in a peculiar and a most conspicuous manner. In the cross, is the abolishing of the power and the fear of death. Deliverance from the dominion of sin, as also the glory to come, are its pleasant fruits. The plain, but most consolatory symbols of the grace of Jesus, in Baptism, and the Holy Supper, point us in like manner to his atoning death, with a charge to shew it forth in particular.

The medium of our acceptance and justification before God, is every where in the gospel said to be *faith in Christ*: and that indeed in opposition to, and with warning against the law, or the seeking of our justification by the works of the law. Now if *believing in Christ* signify only, to receive and to obey his doctrine concerning the rational grounds and duties of religion; how then is the doctrine and the righteousness of faith quite another thing than the demand and righteousness of the law whether we consider the moral law naturally, or as written by Moses? Nay, Moses had also taught the capital doctrines of rational religion, God's existence, unity, providence, the duties of man, &c. and that the love of God, and of our neighbour, is more than all sacrifices, was often inculcated under the old economy, and not unknown to the Jews.—Or does the prohibition of seeking righteousness by the law, only mean the omitting of the Mosaic rights? But in the places quoted, and in others, the *law* cannot possibly be understood in such a limited sense. Besides the righteousness of faith, in contradistinction to that of the law, had place even under the old dispensation. Further, these external solemnities could indeed be abolished; but they were instituted by God himself, and hence the observing of them did not so militate against a rational religion, that it in itself could make a man condemnable.—Paul constantly teaches, that the opposition between faith and the law, in respect of our seeking righteousness by them, consists in this, that God's inflexible *law* condemns all sinners, Jews and Gentiles; that by the works of the law, no flesh shall be justified; that

being satisfactory, which cannot be applicable to those that Christ endured; and as for that despair, attended with impatience, and other sins committed by those that suffer eternal

through sin, the law is become weak to give life: but that faith acknowledges and embraces Christ, as he who fulfilled the righteousness of the law, was made a curse for us, and set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, not only in his *doctrine*, but in his *blood*, for a demonstration of the righteousness of God.

And why else was "Christ crucified unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness?" Surely, not so much on account of the capital truths of rational religion taught by him. The Jewish doctors, and the best philosophers among the Heathens, who had acknowledged them were honoured on that account. Nor was it because Christ, continuing a worthy and faithful, but an unsuccessful teacher of his doctrine, was unjustly accused, and shamefully put to death. The memory of a condemned Socrates was not held in contempt. The reason was purely this, that the Saviour's suffering was proclaimed as the only ground and cause of our reconciliation and salvation: while the Jews and Heathens thought to be saved by the value of their own virtue: and to them it was exceeding strange, and most mortifying to their pride, that penitently acknowledging their guilt, they behoved to seek life in the deep abasement of a crucified Mediator, and in his justifying resurrection.

All our reasoning thus far makes it evident, that we must not understand *the sufferings of Christ for sin*, merely as if God, being about to announce by the gospel, grace and life to the nations, would previously manifest his aversion to sin, by a striking example of his vengeance; and for that purpose, deliver up an ambassador vested with extraordinary privileges, to so much sorrow and shame. Surely all preceding ages had already exhibited awful instances of God's fearful displeasure with the sins of individuals and communities, without deliverance from sin being ever ascribed to them. That a mean man among the people, that a teacher wandering about in poverty, should be shamefully put to death by a civil judge, was much less calculated to exhibit a signal and extraordinary example of divine wrath, than the immediate interposition of Providence, which had often, in former times inflicted, and still could inflict miraculous punishments on the most eminent persons, or on whole nations. At any rate, to manifest a righteous abhorrence of sin, vengeance behoved not to fall upon one perfectly innocent. This last would be quite absurd; unless the innocent person, (as holy scripture has already taught us) should with God's approbation, as spontaneously, as generously, substitute himself in our place, by bearing our sin.—Accordingly, sacred scripture represents the sufferings of Christ, not only as a proof and confirmation, but as the cause of our reconciliation.

We by no means exclude other advantages ascribed by Socinus to the Saviour's death. Beyond all doubt, he thereby confirmed his integrity and the truth of his mission. But, pray, was it ever heard, that a false prophet, in the founding of a new society, mentioned his own, his certain, his fast approaching, and most offensive punishment of death, as the intention of his ministry; and made it an article of his doctrine?—In confirmation of his doctrine and mission, Jesus generally appealed to his miracles; and yet, where are the forgiveness of our sins and a title to life ascribed to his miracles, as they often are to his bloody death?—For what doctrine was Jesus condemned? Not for the truths and prescriptions of natural reason; but because he declared himself to be higher far than any human prophet. (See Section IX.) If the celestial chorus at his birth, if the Father's voice at his inauguration, if his glory on the mount, had been openly perceived by the Jewish council and all the people; if the lightnings darted forth in confirmation of Moses and Elias, had caused him to be honoured; especially if he had satisfied their prejudices concerning the Messiah; if, with legions of his Father's angels, he had destroyed the Roman government, broken that yoke, recovering and extending David's mighty kingdom; their infidelity would have been conquered, and eagerly would they have confided in him. They would have

punishments, that arises from the eternal duration of them, as well as from the corruption of nature, which refuses to subscribe to the justice of God therein, while complaining of the severity of his dispensations.

Thus we have considered Christ's death, as a true and proper sacrifice for sin. We might now take notice of an expression that is used in this answer, which is taken from the words of the apostle, that *once offered himself*. Heb. ix. 28. and that *without spot to God*, ver. 14. This offering being sufficient to answer the end designed, there was no need of repeating it, or of his doing any thing else with the same view; the justice of

been more easily drawn by giving bread, or causing manna to rain, than by promising from his flesh and blood.—A steady martyrdom was more necessary to the preaching of the apostles; because their doctrine in a great measure referred to and was built upon the truth of the all-important events of the Saviour's death and exaltation. In relation to which, as they could not be deceived, so likewise their sincerity behoved to be put beyond suspicion. But the Lord Jesus Christ had abundance of glorious means to confirm his doctrine, and if nothing else had been to be effectuated by it, he behoved not to have undergone a cursed death upon the hill of infamy; and that under the pretence of a legal procedure, which caused the multitude to revolt from him, his friends to be offended at him, and plunged his best followers in deep distress.

We also respect the design of exhibiting in his sufferings, an example of love, submission to, and confidence in God. But such an extremity of shame was not necessary for that purpose; and his sufferings were accompanied with so much perturbation, vehement distress, cries and tears, that quite other ends were ever to be obtained by them; else he would not have exceeded many valiant martyrs. Besides, could any apostle, courageously foreseeing, and alluding to his own martyrdom in confirmation of the truth, and for an example to others, be able to say, as did Christ, "whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, &c.?" 2 Tim. iv. 6. compared with John vi. 51—57

Do men in spite of the divine testimony, find reasons and scruples against a vicarious satisfaction; if we are not much mistaken, they are easy to solve. But far stronger reasons combat the persuasion, that the Holy Supreme Being can show himself favourable, or indifferent, to the voluntary violation of those laws and moral duties from which he himself cannot absolve a rational creature; or to speak in a plain and familiar manner, that God can, and also will suffer sin to escape with impunity.

If then, (to conclude in the language of the apostle, when enlarging on the glory of Christ,) the Son of God, by himself purged our sins; how narrowly and how perversely would we limit his saving work to his preaching? How inconsistent is it with this, that men, according to the usual phrase among Christians, ascribe efficacious *merits* to Christ; but in an unusual sense understand them only of his doctrine and his excellent character? against which sentiment, too, much could be objected. How evidently then is that confirmed, which we asserted, that Christ himself in his person and performances, is the cause and ground of our salvation? If the suffering and death of Christ alone have merited salvation for the innumerable multitude of all them who ever believed in him, or shall believe; if his suffering, though short in duration, was the satisfactory ransom, to deliver all those sinners from the fear of death, and from the wrath to come; then the infinite worth of his person and work, must surpass all understanding; then from that most gracious deliverance we deduce an important proof of his more than human, his divine excellency."

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God having declared itself fully satisfied when he was raised from the dead. But having before considered the infinite value of what he did and suffered, and its efficacy to bring about the work of our redemption, whereby it appears to be more excellent than all the sacrifices that were offered under the ceremonial law, I need not say any more on that subject; and as we have also considered Christ as being sinless, and therefore offering himself as a Lamb, without spot and blemish, and how this was the necessary result of the extraordinary formation and union of the human nature with his divine Person, and the unction which he received from the Holy Ghost; I shall only observe, at present, what is said concerning his offering himself to God. This he is said to have done, in the scripture but now referred to, *through the eternal Spirit*; which words are commonly understood of his eternal Godhead, which added an infinite value to his sacrifice, or, like the altar, sanctified the gift, which is certainly a great truth: But it seems more agreeable, to the most known sense of the word *Spirit*, to understand it concerning his presenting, or making a tender of the service he performed by the hand of the eternal Spirit unto God, as an acceptable sacrifice.

But the main difficulty to be accounted for, in this scripture, is, what is objected by the Socinians, and others, who deny his deity, namely, how he could be said to offer himself to God, since that is the same as to say, that he offered himself to himself, he being, as we have before proved, God equal with the Father. But there is no absurdity in this assertion, if it be understood concerning the service performed by him in his human nature, which, though it was rendered worthy to be offered, by virtue of its union with his divine Person, this act of worship terminated on the Godhead, or tended to the securing the glory of the perfections of that divine nature, which is common to all the divine Persons; and it is in this sense that some ancient writers are to be understood, when they say, that Christ may be said to offer up himself to himself, that is, the service performed in the human nature was the thing offered, and the object hereof, to which all acts of worship are referred, was the divine nature, which belongs to himself as well as the Father. (a)

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(a) "In the consideration of this subject, which every Christian must deem most highly deserving the closest examination, our attention should be directed to two different classes of objectors: those who deny the necessity of any mediation whatever; and those who question the particular nature of that mediation, which has been appointed. Whilst the deist on the one hand ridicules the very notion of a Mediator: and the philosophizing Christian on the other, fashions it to his own hypothesis; we are called on to vindicate the word of truth from the injurious attacks of both; and carefully to secure it, not only against

VI. We shall now consider the persons for whom, as a Priest, Christ offered himself, and so enter on that subject, that is so much controverted in this present age, namely, whether

the open assaults of its avowed enemies, but against the more dangerous misrepresentations of its false or mistaken friends.

The objections which are peculiar to the former, are upon this subject, of the same description with those which they advance against every other part of revelation; bearing with equal force against the system of natural religion, which they support, as against the doctrines of revealed religion, which they oppose. And indeed, this single circumstance, if weighed with candour and reflection; that is, if the deist were truly the philosopher he pretends to be; might suffice to convince him of his error. For the closeness of the analogy between the works of nature, and the word of the gospel, being found to be such, that every blow which is aimed at the one, rebounds with undiminished force against the other: the conviction of their common origin must be the inference of unbiassed understanding.

Thus, when in the outset of his argument, the deist tells us, that as obedience must be the object of God's approbation, and disobedience the ground of his displeasure, it must follow by natural consequence, that when men have transgressed the divine commands, repentance and amendment of life will place them in the same situation as if they had never offended:—he does not recollect, that actual experience of the course of nature directly contradicts the assertion; and that, in the common occurrences of life, the man who by intemperance and voluptuousness, has injured his character, his fortune, and his health, does not find himself instantly restored to the full enjoyment of these blessings on repenting of his past misconduct, and determining on future amendment. Now, if the attributes of the Deity demand, that the punishment should not outlive the crime, on what ground shall we justify this temporal dispensation? The difference in *degree*, cannot affect the question in the least. It matters not, whether the punishment be of long or short duration; whether in this world, or in the next. If the justice or the goodness of God, require that punishment should not be inflicted when repentance has taken place; it must be a violation of those attributes to permit any punishment whatever, the most slight, or the most transient. Nor will it avail to say, that the evils of *this life* attendant upon vice, are the effects of an established constitution, and follow in the way of natural consequence. Is not that established constitution itself, the effect of the divine decree? And are not its several operations as much the appointment of its Almighty framer, as if they had individually flowed from his immediate direction? But besides, what reason have we to suppose that God's treatment of us in a future state, will not be of the same nature as we find it in this; according to established rules, and in the way of natural consequence? Many circumstances might be urged on the contrary, to evince the likelihood that it will. But this is not necessary to our present purpose. It is sufficient, that the deist cannot *prove* that it will *not*. Our experience of the present state of things evinces, that indemnity is not the consequence of repentance here: can he adduce a counter-experience to show, that it will hereafter? The justice and goodness of God are not then *necessarily* concerned, in virtue of the sinner's repentance, to remove all evil consequences upon sin in the next life, or else the arrangement of events in this, has not been regulated by the dictates of justice and goodness. If the deist admits the latter, what becomes of his natural religion?

Now let us inquire, whether the conclusions of abstract reasoning will coincide with the deductions of experience. If obedience be at all times our duty, in what way can present repentance release us from the punishment of former transgressions? Can repentance annihilate what is past? Or can we do more by present obedience, than acquit ourselves of present obligation? Or, does the contrition we experience, added to the positive duties we discharge, constitute a surplussage of merit, which may be transferred to the reduction of our former demerit? And is the justification of the philosopher, who is too enlightened to

Christ died for all men, or only for the elect, whom he designed hereby to redeem, and bring to salvation; and here let it be premised.

be a Christian, to be built, after all, upon the absurdities of supererogation? "We may as well affirm," says a learned Divine, "that our former obedience atones for our present sins, as that our present obedience makes amends for antecedent transgressions." And it is surely with a peculiar ill grace, that this sufficiency of repentance is urged by those, who deny the *possible* efficacy of Christ's mediation; since the ground on which they deny the latter, equally serves for the rejection of the former: the *necessary connexion* between the merits of one being, and the acquittal of another, not being less conceivable, than that which is conceived to subsist between obedience at one time, and the forgiveness of disobedience at another.

Since then, upon the whole, experience (as far as it extends) goes to prove the natural inefficacy of repentance to remove the effects of past transgressions; and the abstract reason of the thing, can furnish no link, whereby to connect present obedience with forgiveness of former sins: it follows, that however the contemplation of God's infinite goodness and love, might excite some faint hope, that mercy would be extended to the sincerely penitent; the animating *certainty* of this momentous truth, without which the religious sense can have no place, can be derived from the express communication of the Deity alone.

But it is yet urged by those, who would measure the proceedings of divine wisdom by the standard of their own reason; that, admitting the necessity of a Revelation on this subject, it had been sufficient for the Deity to have made known to man his benevolent intention; and that the circuitous apparatus of the scheme of redemption must have been superfluous, for the purpose of rescuing the world from the terrors and dominion of sin; when this might have been effected in a way infinitely more simple and intelligible, and better calculated to excite our gratitude and love, merely by proclaiming to mankind a free pardon, and perfect indemnity, on condition of repentance and amendment.

To the disputer, who would thus prescribe to God the mode by which he may best conduct his creatures to happiness, we might as before reply, by the application of his own argument to the course of ordinary events: and we might demand of him to inform us, wherefore the Deity should have left the sustenance of life, depending on the tedious process of human labour and contrivance, in rearing from a small seed, and conducting to the perfection fitting it for the use of man, the necessary article of nourishment; when the end might have been at once accomplished by its instantaneous production. And will he contend that bread has not been ordained for the support of man; because that, instead of the present circuitous mode of its production, it might have been rained down from heaven, like the manna in the wilderness? On grounds such as these, the philosopher (as he wishes to be called) may be safely allowed to object to the notion of forgiveness by a Mediator.

With respect to every such objection as this, it may be well, once for all, to make this general observation. We find, from the whole course of nature, that God governs the world, not by independent acts, but by connected system. The instruments which he employs in the ordinary works of his Providence, are not physically necessary to his operations. He might have acted without them, if he pleased. "He might, for instance, have created all men, without the intervention of parents: but where then had been the beneficial connexion between parents and children; and the numerous advantages resulting to human society from such connexion?" The difficulty lies here: the *uses* arising from the *connexions* of God's acts may be various; and such are the *pregnancies* of his works, that a *single act* may answer a prodigious variety of purposes. Of the several purposes we are, for the most part, ignorant: and from this ignorance are derived most of our weak objections against the ways of his Providence; whilst we foolishly presume, that, like human agents, he has but one end in view.

This observation we shall find of material use in our examination of the re-



1. That it is generally taken for granted, by those who maintain either side of the question, that the saving effects of Christ's death do not redound to all men, or that Christ did

making arguments adduced by the deist on the present subject. And there is none to which it more forcibly applies than to that by which he endeavours to prove the notion of a Mediator to be inconsistent with the *divine immutability*. It is either, he affirms, agreeable to the will of God to grant salvation on repentance, and then he *will* grant it without a Mediator: or it is not agreeable to his will, and then a Mediator can be of no avail, unless we admit the mutability of the divine decrees.

But the objector is not, perhaps, aware how far this reasoning will extend. Let us try it in the case of prayer. All such things as are agreeable to the will of God must be accomplished, whether we pray or not; and therefore our prayers are useless, unless they be supposed to have a power of altering his will. And indeed, with equal conclusiveness it might be proved that repentance itself must be unnecessary. For if it be fit that our sins should be forgiven, God will forgive us without repentance: and if it be unfit, repentance can be of no avail.

The error in all these conclusions is the same. It consists in mistaking a conditional for an absolute decree; and in supposing God to ordain an end unalterably, without any concern as to the intermediate steps, whereby that end is to be accomplished. Whereas the *manner* is sometimes as necessary as the *act* proposed: so that if not done in that particular way, it would not have been done at all. Of this observation, abundant illustration may be derived, as well from natural as from revealed religion. "Thus we know from natural religion, that it is agreeable to the will of God, that the distresses of mankind should be relieved: and yet we see the destitute, from a wise constitution of Providence, left to the precarious benevolence of their fellow-men; and if not relieved by *them*, they are not relieved *at all*. In like manner, in Revelation, in the case of Naaman the Syrian, we find that God was willing he should be healed of his leprosy; but yet he was not willing that it should be done, except in *one particular manner*. Abana and Pharpar were as famous as any of the rivers of Israel. Could he not wash in them, and be clean? Certainly he might, if the design of God had been no more than to heal him. Or it might have been done without any washing at all. But the healing was not the only design of God, nor the most important. The *manner* of the cure was of more consequence in the moral design of God, than the *cure* itself: the effect being produced, for the sake of manifesting to the whole kingdom of Syria, the great power of the God of Israel, by which the cure was performed." And in like manner, though God willed that the penitent sinner should receive forgiveness; we may see good reason why, agreeably to his usual proceeding, he might will it to be granted in one particular manner only, through the intervention of a Mediator.

Although in the present stage of the subject, in which we are concerned with the objections of the DEIST, the argument should be confined to the deductions of natural reason; yet I have added this instance from Revelation, because, strange to say, some who assume the name of Christians, and profess not altogether to discard the written word of Revelation, adopt the very principle which we have just examined. For what are the doctrines of that description of Christians, in the sister kingdom, \* who glory in having brought down the high things of God to the level of man's understanding? That Christ was a person sent into the world to promulgate the will of God: to communicate new lights on the subject of religious duties: by his life to set an example of perfect obedience: by his death to manifest his sincerity: and by his resurrection to convince us of the great truth which he had been commissioned to teach, our rising again to future life. This, say they, is the sum and substance of Christianity. It furnishes a purer morality, and a more operative enforcement: its morality more pure, as built on juster notions of the divine nature: and its enforcement more operative, as founded on a *certainty* of a state of retribution. And is then Christianity nothing but

\* England.

not die, in this respect, for all the world, since to assert this would be to argue that all men shall be saved, which every one supposes contrary to the whole tenor of scripture.

a new and more formal promulgation of the religion of nature? Is the death of Christ but an attestation of his truth? And are we, after all, left to our own merit for acceptance: and obliged to trust for our salvation to the perfection of our obedience? Then indeed, has the great Author of our religion in vain submitted to the agonies of the cross; if after having given to mankind a law, which leaves them less excusable in their transgressions, he has left them to be judged by the rigour of that law, and to stand or fall by their own personal deserts.

It is said, indeed, that as by this new dispensation, the certainty of pardon on repentance has been made known, mankind has been informed of all that is essential in the doctrine of mediation. But granting that no more was intended to be conveyed, than the sufficiency of repentance; yet it remains to be considered *in what way* that repentance was likely to be brought about. Was the bare declaration that God would forgive the repentant sinner, sufficient to ensure his amendment? Or was it not rather calculated to render him easy under guilt, from the facility of reconciliation? What was there to alarm, to rouse the sinner from the apathy of habitual transgression? What was there to make that impression which the nature of God's moral government demands? Shall we say that the grateful sense of divine mercy would be sufficient; and that the generous feelings of our nature, awakened by the supreme goodness, would have secured our obedience? that is, shall we say, that the love of virtue and of right would have maintained man in his allegiance? And have we not then had abundant experience of what man can do, when left to his own exertions, to be cured of such vain and idle fancies? What is the history of man, from the creation to the time of Christ, but a continued trial of his natural strength? And what has been the *moral* of that history, but that man is strong, only as he feels himself weak? strong, only as he feels that his nature is corrupt, and from a consciousness of that corruption, is led to place his whole reliance upon God? What is the description which the apostle of the Gentiles has left us, of the state of the world, at the coming of our Saviour?—*being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despisers, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful—who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Here were the fruits of that natural goodness of the human heart, which is the favorite theme and fundamental principle with that class of Christians, with whom we are at present concerned. And have we not then had full experiment of our natural powers? And shall we yet have the madness to fly back to our own sufficiency, and our own merits, and to turn away from that gracious support, which is offered to us through the mediation of Christ? No: lost as men were, at the time Christ appeared, to all sense of true religion: lost as they must be to it, at all times, when left to a proud confidence in their own sufficiency: nothing short of a strong and salutary terror could awaken them to virtue. Without some striking expression of God's abhorrence of sin, which might work powerfully on the imagination and the heart, what could prove a sufficient counteraction to the violent impulse of natural passions? what, to the entailed depravation, which the history of man, no less than the voice of Revelation, pronounces to have infected the whole human race? Besides, without a full and adequate sense of guilt, the very notion of forgiveness, as it relates to us, is unintelligible. We can have no idea of forgiveness, unless conscious of something to be forgiven. Ignorant of our forgiveness, we remain ignorant of that goodness which confers it. And thus, without some proof of God's hatred for sin, we remain unacquainted with the greatness of his love.

The simple promulgation then, of forgiveness on repentance, could not answer the purpose. Merely to *know* the condition, could avail nothing. An *inducement*

2. It is allowed, by those who deny the extent of Christ's death to all men, as to what concerns their salvation, that it may truly be said, that there are some blessings redounding

of sufficient force to ensure its *fulfilment* was essential. The system of sufficiency had been fully tried, to satisfy mankind of its folly. It was now time to introduce a new system, the system of *humility*. And for this purpose, what expedient could have been devised more suitable than that which has been adopted?—the sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of men: proclaiming to the world, by the greatness of the ransom, the immensity of the guilt: and thence, at the same time evincing, in the most fearful manner, God's utter abhorrence of sin, in requiring such expiation; and the infinity of his love, in appointing it.

To this expedient for man's salvation, though it be the clear and express language of Scripture, I have as yet sought no support from the authority of Scripture itself. Having hitherto had to contend with the deist, who denies all Revelation; and the pretended Christian, who rationalizing away its substance, finds it a mere moral system, and can discover in it no trace of a Redeemer: to urge the declarations of Scripture, as to the particular nature of redemption, would be to no purpose. Its authority disclaimed by the one, and evaded by the other, each becomes unassailable on any ground, but that which he has chosen for himself, the ground of general reason.

But, we come now to consider the objections of a class of Christians who, as they profess to derive their arguments from the language and meaning of Scripture, will enable us to try the subject of our discussion by the only true standard, the word of Revelation. And indeed, it were most sincerely to be wished, that the doctrines of Scripture were at all times collected purely from the Scripture itself: and that preconceived notions and arbitrary theories were not first to be formed, and then the Scripture pressed into the service of each fanciful, dogma. If God has vouchsafed a Revelation, has he not thereby imposed a duty of submitting our understandings to its perfect wisdom? Shall weak, short-sighted men presume to say, "If I find the discoveries of Revelation correspond to my notions of what is right and fit, I will admit them: but if they do not, I am sure they cannot be the genuine sense of Scripture: and I am sure of it, on this principle, that the wisdom of God cannot disagree with itself?" That is, to express it truly, that the wisdom of God cannot but agree with what this judge of the actions of the Almighty deems it wise for him to do. The language of Scripture must then, by every possible refinement, be made to surrender its fair and natural meaning, to this predetermination of its necessary import. But the word of revelation being thus pared down to the puny dimensions of human reason, how differs the Christian from the deist? The only difference is this: that whilst the one denies that God hath given us a Revelation; the other, compelled by evidence to receive it, endeavours to render it of no effect. But in both there is the same self-sufficiency, the same pride of understanding that would erect itself on the ground of human reason, and that disdains to accept the divine favour on any conditions but its own. In both, in short, the very characteristic of a Christian spirit is wanting—*HUMILITY*. For in what consists the entire of Christianity, but in this; that feeling an utter incapacity to work out our own salvation, we submit our whole-selves, our hearts, and our understandings, to the divine disposal; and relying on God's gracious assistance, ensured to our honest endeavours to obtain it, through the Mediation of Christ Jesus, we look up to him, and to him alone, for safety? Nay, what is the very *notion* of religion, but this humble reliance upon God? Take this away, and we become a race of independent beings, claiming as a debt the reward of our good works; a sort of contracting party with the Almighty, contributing nought to his glory, but anxious to maintain our own independence, and our own rights. And is it not to subdue this rebellious spirit, which is necessarily at war with virtue and with God, that Christianity has been introduced? Does not every page of revelation, peremptorily pronounce this; and yet shall we exercise this spirit, even upon Christianity itself? Assuredly if we do; if, on the contrary, our pride of under-



to the whole world, and more especially to those who sit under the sound of the gospel, as the consequence of Christ's death; inasmuch as it is owing hereunto, that the day of God's

standing, and self-sufficiency of reason, are not made to prostrate themselves before the awfully mysterious truths of revelation; if we do not bring down the rebellious spirit of our nature, to confess that the *wisdom of man* is but *foolishness with God*; we may bear the name of Christians, but we want the essence of Christianity.

These observations, though they apply in their full extent, only to those who reduce Christianity to a system purely rational; yet are, in a certain degree applicable to the description of Christians, whose notion of redemption we now come to consider. For what but a preconceived theory, to which Scripture had been compelled to yield its obvious and genuine signification, could ever have led to the opinion, that in the death of Christ there was *no expiation for sin*; that the word *sacrifice* has been used by the writers of the New Testament merely in a figurative sense; and that the whole doctrine of the redemption amounts but to this, "that God, willing to pardon repentant sinners, and at the same time willing to do it, only in that way, which would best promote the cause of virtue, appointed that Jesus Christ should come into the world; and that *he*, having taught the pure doctrines of the gospel; having passed a life of exemplary virtue; having endured many sufferings, and finally death itself, to prove his truth, and perfect his obedience; and having risen again, to manifest the certainty of a future state; has not only, by his example proposed to mankind a pattern for imitation: but has, by the merits of his obedience, obtained, through his intercession, as a reward, a kingdom or government over the world, whereby he is enabled to bestow pardon and final happiness, upon all who will accept them on the terms of sincere repentance." That is, in other words, we receive salvation through a Mediator: the mediation conducted through intercession: and that intercession successful in recompense of the meritorious obedience of our Redeemer.

Here, indeed, we find the notion of redemption admitted: but in setting up, for this purpose, the doctrine of *pure intercession*, in opposition to that of *atonement*, we shall perhaps discover, when properly examined, some small tincture of that mode of reasoning, which, as we have seen, has led the modern Socinian to contend against the idea of redemption at large; and the deist, against that of revelation itself.

For the present, let us confine our attention to the *objections* which the patrons of this new system bring against the principle of atonement, as set forth in the doctrines of that church to which we more immediately belong. As for those which are founded in views of general reason, a little reflection will convince us, that there is not any, which can be alleged against the latter, that may not be urged with equal force, against the former: not a single difficulty with which it is attempted to encumber the one, that does not equally embarrass the other. This having been evinced, we shall then see how little reason there was for relinquishing the plain and natural meaning of scripture; and for opening the door to a latitude of interpretation, in which, it is but too much the fashion to indulge at the present day, and which if persevered in, must render the word of God a nullity.

The first, and most important of the objections we have now to consider, is that which represents the doctrine of atonement, as founded on the *divine implacability*—inasmuch as it supposes, that to appease the rigid justice of God, it was requisite that punishment should be inflicted; and that consequently the sinner *could* not by any means have been released, had not Christ suffered in his stead. Were this a faithful statement of the doctrine of atonement, there had indeed been just ground for the objection. But that this is not the fair representation of candid truth, let the objector feel, by the application of the same mode of reasoning, to the system which he upholds. If it was necessary to the forgiveness of man, that Christ should suffer; and through the merits of his obe-

patience is lengthened out, and the preaching of the gospel continued to those who are favoured with it; and that this is attended, in many, with restraining grace, and some instances

dience, and as the fruit of his intercession, obtain the power of granting that forgiveness; does it not follow, that had not Christ thus suffered and interceded, we could not have been forgiven? And has *he* not then, as it were, taken us out of the hands of a severe and strict judge; and is it not to him alone that we owe our pardon? Here the argument is exactly parallel, and the objection of implacability equally applies. Now what is the answer? "That although it is through the merits and intercession of Christ that we are forgiven; yet these were not the *procuring cause*, but the *means*, by which God originally disposed to forgive, thought it right to bestow his pardon." Let then the word *intercession* be changed for *sacrifice*, and see whether the answer be not equally conclusive.

The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of atonement, to have *made* God placable, but merely viewed as the *means* appointed by divine wisdom, by which to bestow forgiveness. And agreeably to this, do we not find this sacrifice every where spoken of, as ordained by God himself?—*God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*—and *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*—and again we are told, that *we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot—who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*—and again, that Christ is *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*. Since then, the notion of the efficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, contained in the doctrine of atonement, stands precisely on the same foundation with that of pure intercession—merely as the *means* whereby God has thought fit to grant his favour and gracious aid to repentant sinners; and to fulfil that merciful intention, which he had at all times entertained towards his fallen creatures: and since by the same sort of representation, the charge of implacability in the Divine Being, is as applicable to the one scheme as to the other; that is, since it is a calumny most foully cast upon both: we may estimate with what candour this has been made by those who hold the one doctrine the fundamental ground of their objections against the other. For, on the ground of the expression of God's unbounded love to his creatures every where through Scripture, and of his several declarations that he forgave them *freely*, it is, that they principally contend, that the notion of expiation by the sacrifice of Christ cannot be the genuine doctrine of the New Testament.

But still it is demanded, "in what way can the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation, be conceived to operate to the remission of sins, unless by the appeasing a Being, who otherwise would not have forgiven us?"—To this the answer of the Christian is, "I know not, nor does it concern me to know *in what manner* the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins: it is enough, that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the counsels of the Almighty. I submit to his wisdom: and I will not reject his grace, because his mode of vouchsafing it is not within my comprehension." But now let us try the doctrine of pure intercession by this same objection. It has been asked, how can the sufferings of one Being be conceived to have any connexion with the forgiveness of another. Let us likewise inquire, how the meritorious obedience of one Being, can be conceived to have any connexion with the pardon of the transgressions of another: or whether the prayers of a righteous Being in behalf of a wicked person, can be imagined to have more weight in obtaining forgiveness for the transgressor, than the same supplication, seconded by the offering up of life itself, to procure that forgiveness? The fact is, the want of discoverable connexion has nothing to do with either. Neither the sacrifice nor the intercession has, as far as we can comprehend, any *efficacy* whatever. All that we know, or can know of the one or of the other is, that it has been appointed as the means, by which God has determined to act with respect to man. So that to object to the one, because

of external reformation, which (though it may not issue in their salvation) has a tendency to prevent a multitude of sins, and a greater degree condemnation, that would otherwise ensue.

the mode of operation is unknown, is not only giving up the other, but the very notion of a Mediator; and if followed on, cannot fail to lead to pure deism, and perhaps may not stop even there.

Thus we have seen, to what the general objections against the doctrine of atonement amount. The charges of *divine implacability*, and of *inefficacious means*, we have found to bear with as little force against this, as against the doctrine which is attempted to be substituted in its room.

We come now to the objections which are drawn from the immediate language of scripture, in those passages in which the nature of our redemption is described. And first, it is asserted, that it is no where said in scripture, that God is reconciled to us by Christ's death, but that we are every where said to be reconciled to God. Now, in this objection, which clearly lays the whole stress upon *our obedience*, we discover the secret spring of this entire system, which is set up in opposition to the scheme of atonement: we see that reluctance to part with the proud feeling of merit, with which the principle of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ is openly at war: and consequently we see the essential difference there is between the two doctrines at present under consideration; and the necessity there exists for separating them by the clearest marks of distinction. But to return to the objection that has been made, it very fortunately happens, that we have the meaning of the words in their scripture use, defined by no less an authority than that of our Saviour himself—*If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way—first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*. Now, from this plain instance, in which the person *offending* is expressly described, as the party to be reconciled to him who had been *offended*, by agreeing to his terms of accommodation, and thereby making his peace with him; it manifestly appears, in what sense this expression is to be understood in the language of the New Testament. The very words then produced for the purpose of showing that there was no displeasure on the part of God, which it was necessary by some means to avert, prove the direct contrary: and our *being reconciled to God*, evidently does not mean, our giving up our sins, and thereby laying aside *our* enmity to God, (in which sense the objection supposes it to be taken) but the turning away *his* displeasure, whereby we are enabled to regain his favour. And indeed it were strange, had it not meant this. What! are we to suppose the God of the Christian, like the deity of the Epicurean, to look on with indifference upon the actions of this life, and not to be offended at the sinner? The displeasure of God, it is to be remembered, is not like man's displeasure, a resentment or passion, but a judicial disapprobation: which if we abstract from our notion of God, we must cease to view him as the moral governor of the world. And it is from the want of this distinction, which is so highly necessary; and the consequent fear of degrading the Deity, by attributing to him what might appear to be the weakness of passion; that they, who trust to reason more than to scripture, have been withheld from admitting any principle that implied displeasure on the part of God. Had they attended but a little to the plain language of scripture, they might have rectified their mistake. They would there have found the wrath of God against the disobedient, spoken of in almost every page. They would have found also a case which is exactly in point to the main argument before us; in which there is described, not only the wrath of God, but the turning away of his displeasure by the mode of sacrifice. The case is that of the three friends of Job,—in which God expressly says, that his *wrath is kindled against the friends of Job, because they had not spoken of him the thing that was right*; and at the same time directs them to offer up a sacrifice, as the way of averting his anger.

But then it is urged, that God is every where spoken of as a being of infinite love. True; and the whole difficulty arises from building on partial texts. When



These may be called the remote, or secondary ends of Christ's death, which was principally and immediately designed to redeem the elect, and to purchase all saving blessings for them,

men perpetually talk of God's justice, as being necessarily modified by his goodness, they seem to forget that it is no less the language of scripture, and of reason, that his goodness should be modified by his justice. Our error on this subject proceeds from our own narrow views, which compel us to consider the attributes of the Supreme Being, as so many distinct qualities, when we should conceive of them as inseparably blended together; and his *whole nature* as *one great impulse* to what is best.

As to God's displeasure against sinners, there can be then upon the whole no reasonable ground of doubt. And against the doctrine of atonement, no difficulty can arise from the scripture phrase of men being *reconciled to God*: since, as we have seen, that directly implies the turning away the displeasure of God, so as to be again restored to his favour and protection.

But, though all this must be admitted by those who will not shut their eyes against reason and scripture; yet still it is contended, that the death of Christ cannot be considered as a *propitiatory sacrifice*. Now, when we find him described as the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world*; when we are told, that *Christ hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God*; and that *he needed not, like the high-priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice daily, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for that this he did once, when he offered up himself*; when he is expressly asserted to be the *propitiation for our sins*; and God is said to have *loved us, and to have sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*; when Isaiah describes *his soul as made an offering for sin*; when it is said that *God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*; and that *by him we have received the atonement*; when these, and many other such passages are to be found; when every expression referring to the death of Christ, evidently indicates the notion of a sacrifice of atonement and propitiation; when this sacrifice is particularly represented, as of the nature of a *sin-offering*; which was a species of sacrifice prescribed to be offered upon the commission of an offence, after which the offending person was considered as if he had never sinned: it may well appear surprising on what ground it can be questioned, that the death of Christ is pronounced in scripture to have been a sacrifice of atonement and expiation for the sins of men.

It is asserted, that the several passages which seem to speak this language, contain nothing more than *figurative allusion*: that all that is intended is, that Christ laid down his life *for*, that is, *on account of* mankind: and that there being circumstances of resemblance between this event and the sacrifices of the law, terms were borrowed from the latter, to express the former in a manner more lively and impressive. And as a proof that the application of these terms is but figurative, it is contended, 1st. That the death of Christ did not correspond *literally* and exactly, to the ceremonies of the Mosaic sacrifice: 2dly. That being in different places compared to different kinds of sacrifices, to *all* of which it could not possibly correspond, it cannot be considered as exactly of the nature of *any*: and lastly, that there was no such thing as a sacrifice of *propitiation* or *expiation of sin* under the Mosaic dispensation at all; this notion having been entirely of Heathen origin.

As to the two first arguments, they deserve but little consideration. The want of an exact similitude to the precise form of the Mosaic sacrifice, is but a slender objection. It might as well be said, that because Christ was not of the species of animal, which had usually been offered up; or because he was not slain in the same manner; or because he was not offered by the high-priest, there could have been no sacrifice. But this is manifest trifling. If the formal notion of a sacrifice for sin, that is, a life offered up in expiation be adhered to, nothing more can be required to constitute it a sacrifice, except by those who mean to cavil, not to discover truth.

Again, as to the second argument, which from the comparison of Christ's death, to the *different* kinds of sacrifices, would infer that it was not of the na-

which shall be applied in his own time and way: Nevertheless others, as a consequence hereof, are made partakers of some blessings of common providence, so far as they are subservient to the salvation of those, for whom he gave himself a ransom.

ture of *any*, it may be replied, that it will more reasonably follow, that it was of the nature of *all*. Resembling that of the *Passover*, inasmuch as by it we were delivered from an evil yet greater than that of Egyptian bondage; partaking the nature of the *sin offering*, as being accepted in expiation of transgression; and similar to the institution of the *scape-goat*, as bearing the accumulated sins of all: may we not reasonably suppose that this one great sacrifice contained the full import and completion of the whole sacrificial system? And that so far from being spoken of in figure, as bearing some resemblance to the sacrifices of the law, *they* were on the contrary, as the apostle expressly tells us, but figures, or faint and partial representations of this stupendous sacrifice which had been ordained from the beginning? And besides, it is to be remarked in general, with respect to the figurative application of the sacrificial terms to the death of Christ; that the striking resemblance between that and the sacrifices of the law, which is assigned as the reason of such application, would have produced just the contrary effect upon the sacred writers; since they must have been aware that the constant use of such expressions, aided by the strength of the resemblance, must have had a foundation for error, in that which constitutes the main doctrine of the Christian faith. Being addressed to a people whose religion was entirely sacrificial, in what but the obvious and literal sense, could the sacrificial representation of the death of Christ have been understood?

We come now to the third and principal objection, which is built upon the assertion, that no sacrifices of *atonement* (in the sense in which we apply this term to the death of Christ) had existence under the Mosaic law: such as were called by that name having had an entirely different import. Now that certain offerings under this denomination, related to *things*, and were employed for the purpose of purification, so as to render them fit instruments of the ceremonial worship, must undoubtedly be admitted. That others were again appointed to relieve *persons* from *ceremonial* incapacities, so as to restore them to the privilege of joining in the services of the temple, is equally true. But that there were others of a nature strictly propitiatory, and ordained to avert the displeasure of God from the transgressor, not only of the ceremonial, but, in some cases, even of the *moral* law, will appear manifest upon a very slight examination. Thus we find it decreed, that *if a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered to him to keep—or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely, then, because he hath sinned in this, he shall not only make restitution to his neighbour—but he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock; and the priest shall make an ATONEMENT for him before the Lord, and it shall be FORGIVEN HIM.* And again in a case of criminal connexion with a bond-maid who was betrothed, the offender is ordered to *bring his trespass-offering, and the priest is to make ATONEMENT for him with the trespass-offering, for the sin which he hath done; and the sin which he hath done shall be FORGIVEN him.* And in the case of all offences which fell not under the description of *presumptuous*, it is manifest from the slightest inspection of the book of Leviticus, that the atonement prescribed, was appointed as the means whereby God might be *propitiated*, or *reconciled to the offender*.

Again, as to the *vicarious* import of the Mosaic sacrifice; or, in other words, its expressing an acknowledgment of what the sinner had deserved; this not only seems directly set forth in the account of the first offering in Leviticus, where it is said of the person who brought a free-will offering, *he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be ACCEPTED FOR him to make atonement for him:* but the ceremony of the scape-goat on the day of expiation, appears to place this matter beyond doubt. On this head, however, as not being necessary to my argument, I shall not at present enlarge.

3. It is allowed on both sides, and especially by all that own the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, that his death was sufficient to redeem the whole world, had God designed that it

That expiatory sacrifice (in the strict and proper sense of the word) was a part of the Mosaic institution, there remains then, I trust, no sufficient reason to deny. That it existed in like manner amongst the Arabians, in the time of Job, we have already seen. And that its universal prevalence in the Heathen world, though corrupted and disfigured by idolatrous practices, was the result of an original divine appointment, every candid inquirer will find little reason to doubt. But be this as it may, it must be admitted, that *propitiatory sacrifices* not only existed through the whole Gentile world, but had place under the law of Moses. The argument then, which from the non-existence of such sacrifices amongst the Jews, would deny the term when applied to the death of Christ, to indicate such sacrifice, necessarily falls to the ground.

But, in fact, they who deny the sacrifice of Christ to be a real and proper sacrifice for sin, must, if they are consistent, deny that *any such* sacrifice ever did exist, by divine appointment. For on what principle do they deny the former, but this?—that the sufferings and death of Christ, for the sins and salvation of men, can make no change in God: cannot render him more ready to forgive, more benevolent than he is in his own nature; and consequently can have no power to avert from the offender the punishment of his transgression. Now, on the same principle, *every* sacrifice for the expiation of sin, must be impossible. And this explains the true cause why these persons will not admit the language of the New Testament, clear and express as it is, to signify a real and proper sacrifice for sin: and why they feel it necessary to explain away the equally clear and express description of that species of sacrifice in the old. Setting out with a preconceived erroneous notion of its nature, and one which involves a manifest contradiction: they hold themselves justified in rejecting every acceptance of scripture which supports it. But, had they more accurately examined the true import of the term in scripture use, they would have perceived no such contradiction, nor would they have found themselves compelled to refine away by strained and unnatural interpretations, the clear and obvious meaning of the sacred text. They would have seen, that a sacrifice for sin, in scripture language, implies solely this, “a sacrifice wisely and graciously appointed by God, the moral governor of the world, to expiate the *guilt* of sin in such a manner as to avert the *punishment* of it from the offender.” To ask *why* God should have appointed this particular mode, or in *what way* it can avert the punishment of sin, is to take us back to the general point at issue with the deist, which has been already discussed. With the Christian, who admits redemption under *any* modification, such matters cannot be subjects of inquiry.

But even to our imperfect apprehension, some circumstances of natural connexion and fitness may be pointed out. The whole may be considered as a sensible and striking representation of a punishment, which the sinner was conscious he deserved from God's justice: and then, on the part of God, it becomes a public declaration of his *holy displeasure* against sin, and of his *merciful compassion* for the sinner; and on the part of the offender, when offered by or for him, it implies a sincere *confession of guilt*, and a hearty desire of obtaining *pardon*: and upon the *due* performance of this service, the sinner is pardoned, and escapes the penalty of his transgression.

This we shall find agreeable to the nature of a *sacrifice for sin*, as laid down in the Old Testament. Now is there any thing in this degrading to the honour of God; or in the smallest degree inconsistent with the dictates of natural reason? And in this view, what is there in the death of Christ, as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, that may not in a certain degree, be embraced by our natural notions? For according to the explanation just given, is it not a declaration to the whole world, of the greatness of their sins; and of the proportionate mercy and compassion of God, who had ordained this method, whereby, in a manner consistent with his attributes, his fallen creatures might be again taken into his



should be a price for them, which is the result of the infinite value of it; therefore,

4. The main question before us is, whether God designed

favour, on their making themselves parties in this great sacrifice: that is, on their complying with those conditions, which, on the received notion of sacrifice, would render them parties in this; namely, an adequate conviction of guilt, a proportionate sense of God's love, and a firm determination, with an humble faith in the sufficiency of this sacrifice, to endeavour after a life of amendment and obedience? Thus much falls within the reach of our comprehension on this mysterious subject. Whether in the expanded range of God's moral government, some other end may not be held in view, in the death of his only begotten Son, it is not for us to enquire; nor does it in any degree concern us: what God has been pleased to reveal, it is alone our duty to believe.

One remarkable circumstance indeed there is, in which the sacrifice of Christ differs from all those sacrifices which were offered under the law. Our blessed Lord was not only the *Subject* of the offering, but the *Priest* who offered it. Therefore he has become not only a sacrifice, but an intercessor; his intercession being founded upon this voluntary act of benevolence, by which *he offered himself without spot to God*. We are not only then in virtue of the *sacrifice*, forgiven; but in virtue of the *intercession* admitted to favour and grace. And thus the scripture notion of the sacrifice of Christ, includes every advantage, which the advocates for the pure intercession, seek from their scheme of redemption. But it also contains others, which they necessarily lose by the rejection of that notion. It contains the great advantage of impressing mankind with a *due* sense of their guilt, by compelling a comparison with the immensity of the sacrifice made to redeem them from its effects. It contains that, in short, which is the soul and substance of all Christian virtue—**HUMILITY**. And the fact is plainly this, that in every attempt to get rid of the scripture doctrine of atonement, we find feelings of a description opposite to this evangelic quality, more or less to prevail: we find a fondness for the opinion of man's own sufficiency, and an unwillingness to submit with devout and implicit reverence, to the sacred word of revelation. — — —

In the mode of inquiry which has been usually adopted on this subject, one prevailing error deserves to be noticed. The nature of sacrifice, as generally practised and understood, antecedent to the time of Christ, has been first examined; and from that, as a ground of explanation, the notion of Christ's sacrifice has been derived: whereas, in fact by *this*, all former sacrifices are to be interpreted; and in reference to *it* only, can they be understood. From an error so fundamental, it is not wonderful that the greatest perplexities should have arisen concerning the nature of sacrifice in general; and that they should ultimately fall with cumulative confusion on the nature of that particular sacrifice, to the investigation of which fanciful and mistaken theories had been assumed as guides. Thus, whilst some have presumptuously attributed the early and universal practice of sacrifice, to an irrational and superstitious fear of an imagined sanguinary divinity; and have been led in defiance of the express language of revelation, to reject and ridicule the notion of sacrifice, as originating only in the grossness of superstition: others, not equally destitute of reverence for the sacred word, and consequently not treating this solemn rite with equal disrespect, have yet ascribed its origin to human invention; and have thereby been compelled to account for the divine institution of the Jewish sacrifices as a mere accommodation to prevailing practice; and consequently to admit, even the sacrifice of Christ itself to have grown out of, and been adapted to, this creature of human excogitation.

Of this latter class, the theories, as might be expected, are various. In one, sacrifices are represented in the light of *gifts*, intended to sooth and appease the Supreme Being, in like manner as they are found to conciliate the favour of men: in another, they are considered as *federal rites*, a kind of eating and drinking with God, as it were at his table, and thereby implying the being restored to a state

the salvation of all mankind by the death of Christ, or whether he accepted it as a price of redemption for all, so that it might be said that he redeemed some who shall not be saved by him?

of friendship with him, by repentance and confession of sins; in a third, they are described as but *symbolical actions*, or a more expressive language, denoting the gratitude of the offerer, in such as are eucharistical; and in those that are expiatory, the acknowledgment of, and contrition for sin strongly expressed by the death of the animal, representing *that death* which the offerer confessed to be his own desert.

To these different hypotheses, which in the order of their enumeration, claim respectively the names of *Spencer, Sykes, and Warburton*, it may generally be replied, that the *fact* of Abel's sacrifice seems inconsistent with them all: with the first, inasmuch as it must have been antecedent to those distinctions of property, on which alone experience of the effects of gifts upon men could have been founded: with the second, inasmuch as it took place several ages prior to that period, at which both the words of scripture, and the opinions of the wisest commentators have fixed the permission of animal food to man: with the third, inasmuch as the language, which scripture expressly states to have been derived to our first parents from divine instruction, cannot be supposed so defective in those terms that related to the worship of God, as to have rendered it necessary for Abel to call in the aid of actions, to express the sentiment of gratitude or sorrow; and still less likely is it that he would have resorted to that *species* of action, which in the eye of reason, must have appeared displeasing to God, the slaughter of an unoffending animal.

To urge these topics of objection in their full force, against the several theories I have mentioned, would lead to a discussion far exceeding the due limits of a discourse from this place. I therefore dismiss them for the present. Nor shall I, in refutation of the *general* idea of the human invention of sacrifice, enlarge upon the *universality* of the practice; the *sameness* of the notion of its efficacy, pervading nations and ages the most remote; and the *unreasonableness* of supposing any natural connexion between the slaying of an animal, and the receiving pardon for the violation of God's laws,—all of which appear decisive against that idea. But, as both the general idea and the particular theories which have endeavoured to reconcile to it the nature and origin of sacrifice, have been caused by a departure from the true and only source of knowledge; let us return to that sacred fountain, and whilst we endeavour to establish the genuine scripture notion of sacrifice, at the same time provide the best refutation of every other.

It requires but little acquaintance with scripture to know that the lesson which it every where inculcates, is, that man by disobedience had fallen under the displeasure of his Maker; that to be reconciled to his favour, and restored to the means of acceptable obedience, a Redeemer was appointed, and that this Redeemer laid down his life to procure for repentant sinners forgiveness and acceptance. This surrender of life has been called by the sacred writers a sacrifice; and the end attained by it, expiation or atonement. With such as have been desirous to reduce Christianity to a mere moral system, it has been a favourite object to represent this sacrifice as entirely figurative founded only in allusion and similitude to the sacrifices of the law; whereas, that this is spoken of by the sacred writers, as a real and proper sacrifice, to which those under the law bore respect but as types or shadows, is evident from various passages of holy writ, but more particularly from the epistle to the Hebrews; in which it is expressly said, that *the law having a shadow of good things to come, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect;—but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* And again, when the writer of this epistle speaks of the high-priest entering into the holy of holies with the blood of the sacrifice, he asserts, that *this was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, but Christ being come, an high priest of good things to come; not by the blood of goats*

This is affirmed by many, who maintain universal redemption; which we must take leave to deny. And they farther add, as an explication hereof, that Christ died that he might put all

*and calves, but by his own blood, he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us; for, he adds, if the blood of bulls and of goats sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* It must be unnecessary to detail more of the numerous passages which go to prove that the sacrifice of Christ was a true and effective sacrifice, whilst those of the law were but faint representations, and inadequate copies, intended for *its* introduction.

Now, if the sacrifices of the *Law* appear to have been but preparations for this one great sacrifice, we are naturally led to consider whether the same may not be asserted of sacrifice from the beginning: and whether we are not warranted by scripture, in pronouncing the entire rite to have been ordained by God, as a type of that **ONE SACRIFICE**, in which all others were to have their consummation.

That the institution was of divine ordinance, may, in the first instance, be reasonably inferred from the strong and sensible attestation of the divine acceptance of sacrifice in the case of Abel, again in that of Noah, afterwards in that of Abraham, and also from the systematic establishment of it by the same divine authority, in the dispensation of Moses. And whether we consider the book of Job as the production of Moses; or of that pious worshipper of the true God, among the descendants of Abraham, whose name it bears; or of some other person who lived a short time after, and composed it from the materials left by Job himself; the representation there made of God, as *prescribing* sacrifices to the friends of Job, in every supposition exhibits a strong authority, and of high antiquity, upon this question.

These few facts, which I have stated, unaided by any comment, and abstracting altogether from the arguments which embarrass the contrary hypothesis, and to which I have already alluded, might perhaps be sufficient to satisfy an inquiring and candid mind, that sacrifice must have had its origin in **DIVINE INSTITUTION**. But if in addition, this rite, as practised in the earliest ages, shall be found connected with the sacrifice of Christ, confessedly of divine appointment: little doubt can reasonably remain on this head. Let us then examine more particularly the circumstance of the first sacrifice offered up by Abel.

It is clear from the words of scripture, that both Cain and Abel made oblations to the Lord. It is clear also, notwithstanding the well known fanciful interpretation of an eminent commentator, that Abel's was an *animal* sacrifice. It is no less clear, that Abel's was accepted, whilst that of Cain was rejected. Now what could have occasioned the distinction? The acknowledgment of the Supreme Being and of his universal dominion, was no less strong in the offering of the fruits of the earth by Cain, than in that of the firstlings of the flock by Abel: the intrinsic efficacy of the gift must have been the same in each, each giving of the best that he possessed; the expression of gratitude, equally significant and forcible in both. How then is the difference to be explained? If we look to the writer to the Hebrews, he informs us, that the ground on which Abel's oblation was preferred to that of Cain, was, that Abel offered his in *faith*; and the criterion of this faith also appears to have been, in the opinion of this writer, the *animal* sacrifice. The words are remarkable—*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.* The words here translated, *a more excellent sacrifice*, are in an early version rendered *a much more sacrifice*, which phrase, though uncouth in form, adequately conveys the original. The meaning then is, that by faith Abel offered that which was much more of the true nature of sacrifice than what had been offered by Cain. Abel consequently was directed by faith, and this faith was manifested in the nature of his offering. What then are we to infer?—Without some revelation granted, some assurance held out as the object of faith, Abel could not have exercised this virtue: and without some peculiar



men into a salvable state, or procure a possibility of salvation for them; so that many might obtain it, by a right improvement of his death, who shall fall short of it; and also that it

mode of sacrifice enjoined, he could not have exemplified his faith by an appropriate offering. The offering made, we have already seen, was that of an animal. Let us consider whether this could have a connexion with any divine assurance communicated at that early day.

It is obvious that the promise made to our first parents, conveyed an intimation of some future deliverer, who should overcome the tempter that had drawn man from his innocence, and remove those evils which had been occasioned by the fall. This assurance, without which, or some other ground of hope, it seems difficult to conceive how the principle of religion could have had place among men, became to our first parents the *g* and object of faith. To perpetuate this fundamental article of religious belief among the descendants of Adam, some striking memorial of the fall of man, and of the promised deliverance, would naturally be appointed. And if we admit that the scheme of redemption by the death of the only begotten Son of God, was determined from the beginning; that is, if we admit that when God had ordained the deliverance of man, he had ordained the means: if we admit that Christ was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; what memorial could be devised more apposite than that of an animal sacrifice?—exemplifying, by the slaying of the victim, the death which had been denounced against man's disobedience:—thus exhibiting the awful lesson of that death which was the wages of sin, and at the same time representing that death which was actually to be undergone by the Redeemer of mankind:—and hereby connecting in one view, the two great cardinal events in the history of man, the *FALL*, and the *RECOVERY*: the death denounced against sin, and the death appointed for that Holy One who was to lay down his life to deliver man from the consequences of sin. The institution of an animal sacrifice seems then to have been peculiarly significant, as containing all the elements of religious knowledge: and the adoption of this rite, with sincere and pious feelings, would at the same time imply an humble sense of the unworthiness of the offerer; a confession that death which was inflicted on the victim, was the desert of those sins which had arisen from man's transgression; and a full reliance upon the promises of deliverance, joined to an acquiescence in the means appointed for its accomplishment.

If this view of the matter be just, there is nothing improbable even in the supposition that that part of the signification of the rite which related to the sacrifice of Christ, might have been in some degree made known from the beginning. But not to contend for this, (scripture having furnished no express foundation for the assumption,) room for the exercise of faith is equally preserved, on the idea that animal sacrifice was enjoined in the general as the religious sign of faith in the promise of redemption, without any intimation of the way in which it became a sign. Agreeably to these principles, we shall find but little difficulty in determining on what ground it was that Abel's offering was accepted, whilst that of Cain was rejected. Abel, in firm reliance on the promise of God, and in obedience to his command, offered that sacrifice which had been enjoined as the religious expression of his faith; whilst Cain, disregarding the gracious assurances that had been vouchsafed, or at least disdaining to adopt the prescribed mode of manifesting his belief, possibly as not appearing to *his reason* to possess any efficacy or natural fitness, thought he had sufficiently acquitted himself of his duty in acknowledging the general superintendence of God, and expressing his gratitude to the Supreme Benefactor, by presenting some of those good things which he thereby confessed to have been derived from his bounty. In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits the first fruits of his parents' disobedience, in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason, rejecting the aids of revelation, because they fell not within *its* apprehension of right. He takes the first place in the annals of *deism*, and displays, in his proud rejection of the or-

is in their power to frustrate the ends thereof, and so render it ineffectual. This we judge not only to be an error, but such as is highly derogatory to the glory of God; which we shall en-

dinance of sacrifice, the same spirit, which, in later days, has actuated his *enlightened* followers, in rejecting the sacrifice of Christ.

This view of the subject receives strength, from the terms of expostulation in which God addresses Cain, on his expressing resentment at the rejection of *his* offering, and the acceptance of Abel's. The words in the present version are, *if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?—and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door*—which words, as they stand connected in the context, supply no very satisfactory meaning, and have long served to exercise the ingenuity of commentators to but little purpose. But if the word, which is here translated *SIN*, be rendered, as we find it in a great variety of passages in the Old Testament, a *SIN OFFERING*, the reading of the passage then becomes, *if thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, a sin offering lieth even at the door*. The connexion is thus rendered evident. God rebukes Cain for not conforming to that species of sacrifice which had been offered by Abel. He refers to it as a matter of known injunction; and hereby points out the ground of distinction in his treatment of him, and his brother: and thus, in direct terms, enforces the observance of animal sacrifice.

As that part of my general position, which pronounces sacrifice to have been of *divine institution*, receives support from the passage just recited; so to that part of it which maintains that this rite bore an aspect to the *sacrifice of Christ*, additional evidence may be derived from the language of the writer to the Hebrews, inasmuch as he places the blood of Abel's sacrifice in direct comparison with the blood of Christ, which he styles pre-eminently *the blood of sprinkling*: and represents both as *speaking good things*, in different degrees. What then is the result of the foregoing reflections?—The sacrifice of Abel was an animal sacrifice. This sacrifice was accepted. The ground of this acceptance was the faith in which it was offered. Scripture assigns no other object of this faith but the promise of a Redeemer: and of this faith, the offering of an animal in sacrifice, appears to have been the legitimate, and consequently the instituted, expression. The institution of animal sacrifice then, was coeval with the fall, and had a reference to the sacrifice of our redemption. But as it had also an immediate and most apposite application to that important event in the condition of man, which, as being the occasion of, was essentially connected with the work of redemption, *that* likewise we have reason to think was included in its signification. And thus, upon the whole, sacrifice appears to have been ordained as a *standing memorial of the death introduced by sin, and of that death which was to be suffered by the Redeemer*.

We accordingly find this institution of animal sacrifice continue until the giving of the law. No other offering than that of an animal being recorded in scripture down to this period, except in the case of Cain, and that we have seen was rejected. The sacrifices of Noah and of Abraham are stated to have been burnt-offerings. Of the same kind also were the sin-offerings presented by Job, he being said to have offered burnt-offerings according to the number of his sons, lest some of them *might have sinned in their hearts*. But when we come to the promulgation of the law, we find the connexion between animal sacrifice and atonement, or reconciliation with God, clearly and distinctly announced. It is here declared that sacrifices for sin should, on conforming to certain prescribed modes of oblation, be accepted as the means of deliverance from the penal consequences of transgression. And with respect to the *peculiar efficacy* of animal sacrifice, we find this remarkable declaration,—*the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make atonement for the soul*: in reference to which words, the sacred writer formally pronounces, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission*. Now in what conceivable light can we view this institution, but in relation to that great sacrifice which was to make atonement for sins: to that *blood of sprinkling*, which was to *speak better things than that of Abel*, or that

deavour to make appear, and to establish the contrary doctrine, namely, that Christ died to purchase salvation for none but those who shall obtain it. This may be proved,

of the law. The *law* itself is said to have had respect solely unto him. To what else can the principal institution of the law refer?—an institution too, which unless so referred appears utterly unmeaning. The offering up an animal cannot be imagined to have had any intrinsic efficacy in procuring pardon for the transgression of the offerer. The blood of bulls and of goats could have possessed no virtue, whereby to cleanse him from his offences. Still less intelligible is the application of the blood of the victim to the purifying of the parts of the tabernacle, and the apparatus of the ceremonial worship. All this can clearly have had no other than an *instituted* meaning; and can be understood only as in reference to some blood-shedding, which in an eminent degree possessed the power of purifying from pollution. In short, admit the sacrifice of Christ to be held in view in the institutions of the law, and every part is plain and intelligible; reject that notion, and every theory devised by the ingenuity of man, to explain the nature of the ceremonial worship, becomes trifling and inconsistent.

Granting then the case of the Mosaic sacrifice and that of Abel's to be the same; neither of them in itself efficacious; both instituted by God; and both instituted in reference to that true and efficient sacrifice, which was one day to be offered: the rite, as practised before the time of Christ, may justly be considered as a SACRAMENTAL MEMORIAL, *showing forth the Lord's death until he came*; and when accompanied with a due faith in the promises made to the early believers, may reasonable be judged to have been equally acceptable with that sacramental memorial, which has been enjoined by our Lord himself to his followers, for the *showing forth his death until his coming again*. And it deserves to be noticed that this very analogy seems to be intimated by our Lord, in the language used by him at the institution of that solemn Christian rite. For in speaking of his own blood, he calls it, in direct reference to the blood wherewith Moses established and sanctified the first covenant, *the blood of the NEW covenant, which was shed for the remission of sins*: thus plainly marking out the similitude in the nature and objects of the two covenants, at the moment that he was prescribing the great sacramental commemoration of his own sacrifice.

From this view of the subject, the history of scripture sacrifice becomes consistent throughout. The sacrifice of Abel, and the patriarchal sacrifices down to the giving of the law, record and exemplify those momentous events in the history of man,—the death incurred by sin, and that inflicted on our Redeemer. When length of time, and mistaken notions of religion leading to idolatry and every perversion of the religious principle, had so far clouded and obscured this expressive act, of primeval worship, that it had ceased to be considered by the nations of the world in that *reference* in which its true value consisted: when the mere rite remained, without any remembrance of the promises, and consequently unaccompanied by that faith in their fulfilment, which was to render it an acceptable service: when the nations, deifying every passion of the human heart, and erecting altars to every vice, poured forth the blood of the victim, but to deprecate the wrath, or satiate the vengeance of each offended deity: when with the recollection of the true God, all knowledge of the true worship was effaced from the minds of men: and when joined to the *absurdity* of the sacrificial rites, their *cruelty*, devoting to the malignity of innumerable sanguinary gods endless multitudes of human victims, demanded the divine interference; then we see a people peculiarly selected, to whom, by express revelation, the knowledge of the one God is restored, and the species of worship ordained by him from the beginning, particularly enjoined. The principal part of the Jewish service, we accordingly find to consist of sacrifice: to which the virtue of expiation and atonement is expressly annexed: and in the manner of it, the particulars appear so minutely set forth, that when the *object* of the whole law should be brought to light, no doubt could remain as to its intended application. The Jewish sacrifices therefore seem to have been designed, as those from the begin-



I. From those distinguishing characters that accompany salvation, which are given to those for whom he died.

1. They are called his *sheep*, in John x. 11. *I am the good*

ning had been, to prefigure that *one*, which was to make atonement for all mankind. And as in this all were to receive their consummation, so *with* this they all conclude: and the institution closes with the completion of its object. But, as the gross perversions, which had pervaded the Gentile world, had reached likewise to the chosen people; and as the temptations to idolatry, which surrounded them on all sides, were so powerful as perpetually to endanger their adherence to the God of their fathers, we find the ceremonial service adapted to their carnal habits. And since the law itself, with its accompanying sanctions, seems to have been principally temporal; so the worship it enjoins is found to have been for the most part, rather a public and solemn declaration of allegiance to the true God in opposition to the Gentile idolatries, than a pure and spiritual obedience in moral and religious matters, which was reserved for that more perfect system, appointed to succeed in due time, when the state of mankind would permit.

That the sacrifices of the law should therefore have chiefly operated to the cleansing from external impurities, and to the rendering persons or things fit to approach God in the exercises of the ceremonial worship, whilst at the same time they were designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ, which was purely spiritual, and possessed the transcendent virtue of atoning for all moral pollution, involves in it no inconsistency whatever, since in this the true proportion of the entire dispensations is preserved. And to this point, it is particularly necessary that our attention should be directed, in the examination of the present subject; as upon the *apparent disproportion* in the objects and effects of sacrifice in the Mosaic and Christian schemes, the principal objections against their intended correspondence have been founded.

The sacrifices of the law then being preparatory to that of Christ; *the law itself being but a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ*; the sacred writers in the *New Testament*, naturally adopt the sacrificial terms of the ceremonial service, and by their reference to the use of them as employed under the law, clearly point out the sense in which they are to be understood in their application under the gospel. In examining, then, the meaning of such terms, when they occur in the *New Testament*, we are clearly directed to the explanation that is circumstantially given of them in the *Old*. Thus, when we find the virtue of atonement attributed to the sacrifice of Christ, in like manner as it had been to those under the law; by attending to the representation so minutely given of it in the latter, we are enabled to comprehend its true import in the former.

Of the several sacrifices under the law, that one which seems most exactly to illustrate the sacrifice of Christ, and which is expressly compared with it by the writer to the Hebrews, is that which was offered for the whole assembly on the solemn anniversary of expiation. The circumstances of this ceremony, whereby atonement was to be made for the sins of the whole Jewish people, seem so strikingly significant, that they deserve a particular detail. On the day appointed for this general expiation, the priest is commanded to offer a bullock and a goat as sin-offerings, the one for himself, and the other for the people: and having sprinkled the blood of these in due form before the mercy-seat, to lead forth a second goat, denominated the scape-goat; and after laying both his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, and confessing over him all the iniquities of the people, to *put them upon the head* of the goat, and to send the animal, thus bearing the sins of the people, away into the wilderness: in this manner expressing by an action, which cannot be misunderstood, that the atonement, which it is directly affirmed was to be effected by the sacrifice of the sin-offering, consisted in removing from the people their iniquities by this symbolical translation to the animal. For it is to be remarked, that the ceremony of the scape-goat is not a *distinct* one: it is a continuation of the process, and is evidently the concluding part and symbolical consummation of the sin-offering. So that the transfer of the iniquities of the people upon the head of the scape-goat, and the bearing them

*Shepherd, the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.* This metaphor must certainly imply, that they, for whom Christ died, are distinguished from the world, as the objects of his immediate care, and special gracious providence: But, besides this, there are several things in the context, which contain a farther description of these *sheep*, for whom he laid down his life, which cannot be applied to the whole world: Thus it is said, in ver. 14. *I know my sheep, and am known of them*, that is, with a knowledge of affection, as the word *knowledge* is often used in scripture, when applied to Christ, or his people. Again, these sheep are farther described, as those who shall certainly obtain salvation; as our Saviour says concerning them, in ver. 27, 28. *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they*

away to the wilderness, manifestly imply that the atonement effected by the sacrifice of the sin-offering, consisted in the transfer and consequent removal of those iniquities. What then are we taught to infer from this ceremony?—That as the atonement under the law, or expiation of the legal transgressions, was represented as a translation of those transgressions, in the act of sacrifice in which the animal was slain, and the people thereby cleansed from their legal impurities, and released from the penalties which had been incurred; so the great atonement for the sins of mankind was to be effected by the sacrifice of Christ, undergoing for the restoration of men to the favour of God, that death which had been denounced against sin; and which he suffered in like manner as if the sins of men had been *actually* transferred to him, as those of the congregation had been *symbolically* transferred to the sin-offering of the people.

That this is the true meaning of the atonement effected by Christ's sacrifice, receives the fullest confirmation from every part of both the Old and the New Testament: and that thus far the death of Christ is vicarious, cannot be denied without a total disregard of the sacred writings.

It has indeed been asserted, by those who oppose the doctrine of atonement as thus explained, that nothing *vicarious* appears in the Mosaic sacrifices. With what justice this assertion has been made, may be judged from the instance of the sin-offering that has been adduced. The transfer to the animal of the iniquities of the people, (which must necessarily mean the transfer of their penal effects, or the subjecting the animal to suffer on account of those iniquities)—this accompanied with the death of the victim; and the consequence of the whole being the removal of the punishment of those iniquities from the offerers, and the ablation of all legal offensiveness in the sight of God:—thus much of the nature of vicarious, the language of the Old Testament justifies us in attaching to the notion of atonement. Less than this we are clearly not at liberty to attach to it. And what the law thus sets forth as its express meaning, directly determines that which we must attribute to the great atonement of which the Mosaic ceremony was but a type: always remembering carefully to distinguish between the figure and the substance; duly adjusting their relative value and extent; estimating the efficacy of the one as real, intrinsic, and universal; whilst that of the other is to be viewed as limited, derived, and emblematic.

It must be confessed, that to the principles on which the doctrine of the Christian atonement has been explained in this, representation of it, several objections, in addition to those already noticed, have been advanced. These, however, cannot now be examined in this place. The most important have been discussed; and as for such as remain, I trust that to a candid mind, the general view of the subject which has been given, will prove sufficient for their refutation."

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*shall never perish; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand: but this privilege, without doubt, belongs not to the whole world.*

They are also considered as believers, inasmuch as faith is the necessary consequence of Christ's redemption, and accordingly are distinguished from the world, or that part thereof, which is left in unbelief and impenitency: Thus Christ says, concerning those who rejected his Person and gospel, in ver. 26. *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.*

2. They for whom Christ died are called his *friends*, and, as such, the objects of his highest love, in John xv. 13. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, and they are farther described, in the following words, as expressing their love to him, by *doing whatsoever he commandeth them*; and, he calls them friends, so they are distinguished from servants, or slaves, who, though they may be made partakers of common favours, yet he imparts not his secrets to them; but, with respect to these, he says, in ver. 15, 16. *All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you*; And they are farther distinguished from the world, inasmuch as they are *chosen by Christ, and ordained that they should go and bring forth fruit*; and there are several other privileges which accompany salvation, that are said to belong to these friends of Christ, for whom he died.

*Object.* It is objected, that what Christ here says, concerning his friends, is particularly directed to his disciples, with whom at that time he conversed and these he considers as persons who had made a right improvement of his redeeming love; and therefore, that redemption which the whole world might be made partakers of, if they would, these were like to reap the happy fruits and effects of.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that whatever promises, or privileges, Christ's disciples were made partakers of, if these do not immediately respect their character as ministers, but as Christians, they are equally to be applied to all believers. Now, that what Christ says to them, whom he calls his friends, is applicable to all believers, appears from their being described as *abiding in him, and bringing forth much fruit*, under the powerful influence of his grace, *without whom they can do nothing*; and, when he speaks, in ver. 19, 26. of the *world's hating them, because they are not of the world*, and of the *Comforter's being sent to testify of him*, in order to the confirmation of their faith, this belongs to all believers, as such; therefore they are as much described as Christ's friends, for whom he laid down his life, as his disciples, to whom he more immediately directed his discourse.

And as for the other part of the objection, namely, that these had made a right improvement of Christ's redemption: the



reply that may be given to it, is, that none but Christ's friends can be said to have made a right improvement of redemption, and therefore none but such have any ground to conclude that Christ died for them : but this is not the temper and character of the greater part of mankind, therefore Christ did not die for the whole world : and it is very evident, from this character which Christ gives of them, for whom he died, that either they are, or shall be, of enemies, made friends to him.

3. They are called, *The Children of God that were scattered abroad*, who should be *gathered together in one*, as the consequence of his death, in John xi. 52. This gathering together in one, seems to import the same thing, with what the apostle speaks of, as a display of the grace of the gospel, and calls it, *their being gathered together in Christ* their Head, in Eph. i. 10. and one part of them he considers, as being already in *heaven*, and the other part of them *on earth*, in their way to it ; and he speaks such things concerning them, in the foregoing and following verses, as cannot be said of any but those that shall be saved. Now, if Christ designed, by his death, to purchase this special privilege for his children, certainly it cannot be supposed that he died for the whole world ; and elsewhere the apostle speaking, in Heb. ii. 10. concerning *the Captain of our salvation's being made perfect through sufferings* considers this as a means for *bringing many sons to glory*, which is a peculiar privilege belonging to the heirs of salvation, and not to the whole world.

*Object. 1.* It will be objected to this, that nothing can be proved from the words of so vile a person as Caiphas, who relates this matter ; and therefore, though it be contained in scripture, it does not prove the truth of the doctrine, which is pretended to be established thereby.

*Ans.* Though Caiphas was one of the vilest men on earth, and he either did not believe this prophecy himself, or, if he did, he made a very bad use of it, yet this does not invalidate the prediction : for though wicked men may occasionally have some prophetic intimation concerning future events, as Balaam had, the instrument, which the Spirit of God makes use of in discovering them to mankind, does not render them less certain, for the worst of men may be employed to impart the greatest truths : therefore it is sufficient to our purpose, that it is said, in the words immediately foregoing, that *being high priest that year, he prophesied*, as it was no uncommon thing for the high priest to have prophetic intimations from God, to deliver to his people, whatever his personal character might be ; so that we must consider this as a divine oracle, and therefore infallibly true.

*Object. 2.* If it be allowed, that what is here predicted was

true, yet the subject-matter thereof respects the nation of the Jews, concerning whom it cannot be said, that every individual was in a state of salvation, and therefore it rather militates against, than proves the doctrine of particular redemption.

*Answ.* It is evident, that when it is said that *Christ should die for that nation*, the meaning is, the children of God in that nation; for the children of God, that dwelt there, are opposed to his children that were scattered abroad; and so the meaning is, Christ died that they should not perish, who have the temper, and disposition of his children, wherever the place of their residence be.

4. They for whom Christ died are called his *church*, whereof he is *the Head*; and *the Body*, of whom *he is the Saviour*, in Eph. v. 23. and these he is said *to have loved, and given himself for*, in ver. 25. Now the church is distinguished from the world, as it is gathered out of it; and the word *church*, in this place, is taken in a very different sense, from that in which it is understood in many other scriptures. The apostle does not mean barely a number of professing people, of which some are sincere, and others may be hypocrites, or of which some shall be saved, and others not; nor does he speak of those who are apparently in the way of salvation, as making a visible profession of the Christian religion: But it is taken for that church, which is elsewhere called *the spouse of Christ*, and is united to him by faith, and that shall, in the end, be eternally saved by him; this is very evident, for he speaks of them, as *sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word*, in ver. 26. And, as to what concerns their future state, they are such as shall be *presented to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, in ver. 27. Now, since it was for these that Christ died, it cannot be reasonably concluded that he died equally and alike for all mankind.

And to this we may add, that they are called *his people*, whom he designed *to save from their sins*, in Matt. i. 21. and also a *peculiar people*, who are described by this character, by which they are known, as being *zealous of good works*, in Tit. ii. 14. and, by his death, they are said not only to be redeemed, so as to be put into the possession of the external privileges of the gospel, but *redeemed from all iniquity*, and purified unto himself; all which expressions certainly denote those distinguishing blessings which Christ, by his death, designed to purchase for those who are the objects thereof.

II. That Christ did not die equally, and alike for all mankind, appears from his death's being an instance of the highest love, and they, who are concerned herein, are in a peculiar manner, obliged to bless him for it as such. Thus the apostle

joins both these together, when he says in Gal. ii. 20. *He loved me, and gave himself for me*; and elsewhere it is said, in Rev. i. 5. *He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*; and herein it is said, that *God commendeth his love towards us*, in Rom. v. 8. as that which is without a parallel. And besides, when he speaks of this love of Christ expressed herein, he seems to distinguish it from that common love which is extended to all, when he says, *Christ died for us*; and, that we may understand what he means thereby, we must consider to whom it was that this epistle was directed, namely, to such as were *beloved of God, called to be saints*, in chap. i. 7. They are also described as such, who *were justified by Christ's blood, and who should be saved from wrath through him; reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and who should be saved by his life*; and, as such, who *joyed in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by him had received the atonement*, in chap. 9—11. therefore surely they, who were thus beloved by Christ, to whom he expressed his love by dying for them, must be distinguished from the world. And our Saviour speaks of this, as far exceeding all that love, which is in the breasts of men, to one another, in John xv. 13. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends*. Therefore we have no reason to suppose that he died equally and alike for all, for then there would be an equal instance of love herein to the best and worst of men; Judas would have been as much beloved as Peter; the Scribes and Pharisees, Christ's avowed enemies and persecutors, as much beloved as his disciples and faithful followers, if there be nothing discriminating in his dying love. Therefore we must conclude that he died to procure some distinguishing blessings for a part of mankind, which all are not partakers of.

And, as this love is so great and discriminating, it is the subject-matter of the eternal praise of glorified saints: The *new song* that is sung to him, in Rev. v. 9. contains in it a celebrating of his glory, as having *redeemed them to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, who were admitted into his immediate presence, as the objects of his distinguishing love. And certainly all this implies more than his purchasing the gospel-dispensation, or the discovery of the way of salvation to mankind, of whom the greatest part neglect, despise, and reap no saving advantage thereby.

III. There are some circumstances attending the death of Christ, which argue, that it was not designed for all the world: particularly, he died as a Surety, or as one who undertook to pay that debt, which the justice of God might have exacted of men in their own persons. This has already been proved; and that which may be inferred from hence, is, that if Christ, by dying, paid this debt, and when he rose from the dead, receiv-



a discharge from the hand of justice, then God will not exact the debt twice, so as to bring them under the condemning sentence of the law, whom Christ, by his death, has delivered from it : this is certainly a privilege that does not belong to the whole world, but to the sanctified.

Moreover, some are not justified or discharged for the sake of a ransom paid, and never shall be ; therefore it may be concluded, that it was not given for them.

IV. It farther appears, that Christ did not die equally and alike for all men, in that he designed to purchase that dominion over, or propriety in them, for whom he died, which would be the necessary result hereof. As they are his trust and charge, given into his hand, to be redeemed by his blood ; (and, in that respect, he undertook to satisfy the justice of God for them, which he has done hereby) so, as the result hereof, he acquired a right to them, as Mediator, by redemption ; pursuant to the eternal covenant between the Father and him, he obtained a right to bestow eternal life on all that were given to, and purchased by him. This tends to set forth the Father's glory, as he designed hereby to recover and bring back fallen creatures to himself ; and it redounds to Christ's glory, as Mediator ; as herein he not only discovers the infinite value of his obedience and sufferings, but all his redeemed ones are rendered the monuments of his love and grace, and shall for ever be employed in celebrating his praise : But certainly this is inconsistent with his death's being ineffectual to answer this end, and consequently he died for none but those whom he will bring to glory, which he could not be said to have done, had he laid down his life for the whole world.

V. That Christ did not die, or pay a price of redemption for all the world, farther appears, in that, salvation, whether begun, carried on, or perfected, is represented, in scripture, as the application thereof ; and all those graces, which are wrought by the Spirit in believers, are the necessary result and consequence thereof. This will appear, if we consider, that when Christ speaks of his *Spirit*, as *sent to convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to guide his people into all truth* he says, *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you*, John xvi. 14. the meaning of which is, that he should apply what he had purchased, whereby his glory, as our Redeemer, would be eminently illustrated ; and elsewhere, when the apostle speaks of the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification, he considers it as the result of Christ's death, and accordingly it is said to be *shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour*, Tit. iii. 6, And when we read of his *redeeming them that were under the law*, their receiving the *adoption of sons*, Gal. iv. 5. and all the privileges contained in

it, these are considered as the necessary consequences thereof; and Christ's being *not spared*, but *delivered up* unto death for those who are described as chosen, called, justified, and such as shall be hereafter glorified, is assigned, as a convincing evidence, that *God will with him freely give them all things*, Rom. viii. 32. Now this cannot, with the least shadow of reason, be applied to the whole world; therefore Christ did not die for, or redeem, all mankind.

That the application of redemption may farther appear to be of equal extent with the purchase thereof, we shall endeavour to prove, that all those graces, which believers are made partakers of here, as well as complete salvation, which is the consummation thereof hereafter, are the purchase of Christ's death. And herein we principally oppose those who defend the doctrine of universal redemption, in that open and self-consistent way, which the Pelagians generally take, who suppose, that faith and repentance, and all other graces, are entirely in our own power; otherwise the conditionality of the gospel-covenant, as they rightly observe, could never be defended, and they, for whom Christ died, namely, all mankind, must necessarily repent and believe. Thus a late writer \* argues, in consistency with his own scheme; whereas some others, who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, and, at the same time, that of efficacious grace, pluck down with one hand, what they build up with the other. It is the former of these that we are now principally to consider, when we speak of the graces of the Spirit, as what are purchased by Christ's blood; and, that this may appear, let it be observed,

1. That complete salvation is styled, *The purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. and our *deliverance from the wrath to come*, is not only inseparably connected with, but contained in it, and both these are considered as purchased by the death of Christ, 1 Thess. i. 10. Rom. v. 9, 10. and the apostle elsewhere, speaking concerning the church, as arrived to its state of perfection in heaven, and its being *without spot or wrinkle or any such thing*, and *without blemish*, that is, when its sanctification is brought to perfection, considers this, as the accomplishment of that great end of Christ's *giving himself for it*, or laying down his life to purchase it, Eph. v. 25, 27.

2 It follows, from hence, that all that grace, whereby believers are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, which is the beginning of this salvation, is the purchase of Christ's blood. Accordingly God is said to have *blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*, (or, as it may be better rendered, in what concerns heavenly things) *in Christ*, Eph. i. 3. that is, for the sake of Christ's death,

\* See *Whitby's discourse*, &c. page 110—112.

which was the purchase thereof; therefore it follows, that faith and repentance, and all other graces, which are wrought in us in this world, are purchased thereby: Thus it is said, *Unto you it is given in behalf of Christ to believe*, as well as to exercise those graces, which are necessary in those who are called *to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 29. and elsewhere God is said to have *exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance*, as well as *forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31. And, since his exaltation includes in it his resurrection from the dead, it plainly argues, that he died to give repentance, and consequently that this grace was purchased by him; and when our Saviour speaks of *sending the Spirit, the Comforter to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*, which comprizes in it that internal work of grace that is wrought by him, he considers this as the consequence of his leaving the world, after he had finished the work of redemption by his death, and so purchased this privilege for them, John xvi. 7, 8.

VI. That Christ did not die for all mankind, appears from his not interceding for them, as he saith, *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine*; and not for his disciples alone, *but for them also which should believe on him through their word*, John xvii. 9, 20. This farther appears from a believer's freedom from condemnation being founded on Christ's *intercession*, as well as his *death and resurrection*, Rom. viii. 34. and his being, at the same time, styled *an Advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for our sins*, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

And this may be farther argued from the nature of Christ's intercession, which (as will be considered in its proper place\*) is his presenting himself, in the merit of his death, in the behalf of those for whom he suffered; as also from his being *always heard* in that which he pleads for, John xi. 42. which argues that they shall be saved, otherwise it could not be supposed that he intercedes for their salvation: but this he cannot be said to do for all mankind, as appears by the event, in that all shall not be saved.

*Object.* To this it is objected that Christ prayed for his enemies, as it was foretold concerning him, by the prophet, who saith, *He made intercession for the transgressors*, Isa. liii. 12. and this was accomplished at his crucifixion, when he saith, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34. That which Christ here prayed for, was forgiveness, which is a privilege connected with salvation; and this he did in the behalf of the multitude that crucified him: but it cannot reasonably be supposed, that all these were saved; therefore if

\* See Quest. LV.



Christ's death and intercession respects the same persons, and necessarily infers their salvation, then it would follow, that this rude and inhuman multitude were all saved, which they, who deny universal redemption do not suppose.

*Ans.* Some, in answer to this objection, suppose, that there is a foundation for a distinction between those supplications, which Christ, in his human nature, put up to God, as being bound, by the moral law, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies; and his Mediatorial prayer or intercession. In the former of these respects, he prayed for them; which prayer, though it argued the greatness of his affection for them, yet it did not necessarily infer their salvation; in like manner, as Stephen, when dying, is represented as praying for those who stoned him, when he saith, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, Acts vii. 80. or, as our Saviour prays for himself in the garden, *O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me*, Matt. xxvi. 39. whereby he signifies the formidableness of the death he was to undergo, and that his human nature could not but dread such a degree of suffering: this they suppose to be different from his Mediatorial intercession for his people, in which he represents the merit of his death, as what would effectually procure the blessings purchased thereby; in this latter sense, he could not be said to pray for any of those who crucified him, who are excluded from salvation.

But, since this reply to the objection hath some difficulties attending it, which render it less satisfactory, especially because it supposes that he was not heard in that which he prayed for, when he desired that God would *forgive them*, I would rather chuse to take another method in answering it; namely, that when Christ prays that God would *forgive them*, he means that God would not immediately pour forth the vials of his wrath upon that wicked generation, as their crime deserved, but that they might still continue to be a people favoured with the means of grace; this he prays for, and herein was answered; and his intercession for them, though it had not an immediate respect to the salvation of all of them, had, notwithstanding, a subserviency to the gathering in of his elect amongst them, whose salvation was principally intended by this intercession, as it was for them that he shed his blood: and accordingly I apprehend, that this desire that God would *forgive them*, implies the same thing as Moses's request, in the behalf of Israel, did, when he saith, *Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, until now*, Numb. xiv. 19. where to pardon intends nothing else but God's not punishing them as their sin deserved, in an immediate, and exemplary way and manner.

VII. The doctrine of universal redemption hath some ab-

surd consequences attending it, not consistent with the divine perfections; as,

1. It would give occasion for Christ to be called the Saviour of those who shall not be eventually saved by him, the Redeemer of many, who are held in chains by the justice of God, and receive no saving benefit by his redemption, or for him to be said to express the highest instance of love, in dying for those who shall for ever be the objects of his hatred, which implies a contradiction; and what is this but to say, that he delivers those from *the wrath to come*, 1 Thess. i. 10. who are, and shall be for ever, children of wrath? therefore we must either assert universal salvation, or deny universal redemption.

2. It will also follow from hence, that he satisfied the justice of God for all the sins of all men; for to lay down a price of redemption, is to discharge the whole debt, otherwise it would be to no purpose. Now, if he satisfied for all the sins of every man, he did this that no sin should be their ruin, and consequently he died to take away the guilt of final impenitency in those who shall perish; and therefore they have, by virtue hereof, a right to salvation, which they shall not obtain: it follows then, that since he did not die for all the sins of all men, he did not, by his death, redeem all men.

3. If Christ died for all men, he intended hereby their salvation, or that they should live: but it is certain he did not intend the salvation of all men; for then his design must be frustrated with respect to a part of them, for whom he died, which contains a reflection on his wisdom, as not adapting the means to the end. Moreover, this supposes that Christ's attaining the end he designed by his death, depends on the will of man, and consequently it subjects him to disappointment, and renders God's eternal purpose dependent on man's conduct.

4. Since God designed, by the death of Christ, to bring to himself a revenue of glory, in proportion to the infinite value thereof, and Christ, our great Mediator, was, as the prophet saith, to have *a portion with the great*, and to *divide the spoil with the strong*, as the consequence of his *pouring out his soul unto death*, Isa. liii. 12. it follows from thence, that if all are not saved, for whom Christ died, then the Father and the Son would lose that glory which they designed to attain hereby, as the work would be left incomplete; and a great part of mankind cannot take occasion from Christ's redeeming them, to adore and magnify that grace, which is displayed therein, since it is not eventually conducive to their salvation.

Having endeavoured to prove the doctrine of particular redemption; we shall now consider the arguments generally brought by those who defend the contrary scheme, who suppose, that God designed, as the consequence of Christ's death,

to save all mankind, upon condition of their repenting and believing, according to the tenor of the gospel-covenant, which is substituted in the room of that which was violated by man's apostacy from God, whereby sincere obedience comes in the room of that perfect obedience, which was the condition of the first covenant. This they call man's being brought into a salvable state by Christ's death; so that Christ rendered salvation possible; whereas faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, render it certain. And, so far as this concerns the design of God, in sending Christ to redeem the world, they suppose that God determined hereby to put man into such a state, that all may be saved, if they will.

And, as to what concerns the event, to wit, man's complying with the condition, they that defend universal redemption are divided in their sentiments about it; some supposing that Christ purchased faith and repentance for a certain number of mankind, namely, those who shall repent and believe, and pursuant thereunto, will work those graces in them; whereas others, who had not these graces purchased for them, shall perish, though Christ has redeemed them. These suppose, that redemption is both universal and particular, in different respects; *universal*, in that all who sit under the sound of the gospel, have a conditional grant of grace contained therein, whereby they are put into a salvable state, or possibility of attaining salvation; and *particular*, with respect to those who shall repent and believe, and so attain salvation; in which sense they apply that scripture, in which God is said to be *the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. This some call a middle way, between the Pelagian and Calvinistic methods of reasoning about this subject; but it appears to be inconsistent with itself, inasmuch as they, who give into this hypothesis, are forced sometimes to decline what they have been contending for on one side, when pressed with some arguments brought in defence of the other; therefore we shall pass this over, and consider the self-consistent scheme, in which universal redemption is maintained.

The sum of all their arguments, who defend it in the Pelagian way, amounts to this, *viz.* that Christ died not to purchase salvation absolutely for any, but to make way for God's entering into a new or gospel covenant with men, in which salvation is promised, on condition of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, which they suppose to be in the power of those who have the gospel. And, that the heathen may not be excluded, though it cannot be styled a gospel-covenant to them, there are abatements made, as to what concerns faith, founded on divine revelation, and the only condition that entitles them to salvation



is their yielding sincere obedience to the law of nature, in proportion to their light.

They farther add, that this gospel-covenant must be conditional, otherwise it could not be called a *covenant*, as wanting an essential ingredient contained in every covenant; and these conditions must be in our own power, otherwise the overture of salvation, depending on the performance thereof, would be illusory; and it could not be called a covenant of grace, inasmuch as there can be no grace, or favour, in promising a blessing upon impossible conditions; neither could this gospel-covenant be styled a better covenant than that which God entered into with our first parents, in which the conditions were in their own power; nor could it be an expedient to repair the ruins of the fall, or bring man, in any sense, into a salvable state. So that, according to this representation of the doctrine of particular redemption, there are not only many absurd consequences attending it, which detract from the glory of the gospel, but it is contrary to the holiness, wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, and so derogates as much from the divine perfections, as any thing that is argued in defence of universal redemption can be pretended to do. And, to sum up the whole argument, there is an appeal to scripture, as that which gives countenance to it in a multitude of instances. This is the substance of all that is said in defence of this doctrine; and, in opposition to it, we shall take leave to observe,

(1.) That it is taken for granted, but not sufficiently proved, that Christ died to purchase the covenant of grace; whereas, if the difference between the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, be only circumstantial, as has been before observed,\* then the death of Christ is included among the conditions of this covenant; and if so, the covenant itself could not be the purchase thereof: but, if by Christ's purchasing the covenant of grace, they only meant his purchasing the graces given in the covenant, we are far from denying it, though they generally do. That therefore which we are principally to oppose, is their sense of the conditionality of the covenant of grace, and its being essential to a covenant to be conditional, namely, to depend on uncertain conditions, in our power to perform, it being as they suppose, left to the freedom of our own will to comply with or reject them, and thereby to establish or disannul this covenant: but having elsewhere proved that the word *covenant* is often used in scripture, without the idea of a condition annexed to it,† and also considered in what respects those ideas, contained in a conditional covenant between man and man, are to be excluded, when we speak of a

\* See Page 178, 179, *ante*.

† See Page 169, 170, *ante*.

covenant between God and man ; \* and having also, in maintaining the doctrine of election, endeavoured to defend the absoluteness of God's will, and shewed in what sense we are to understand those scriptures that are laid down in a conditional form, † which may, with a little variation, be applied to our present argument ; we shall, to avoid the repetition of things before insisted on, add nothing farther in answer to this part of the argument, we are now considering, but only that it implies God to be, in many respects, like ourselves, and supposes that it is in our power to frustrate, and render the death of Christ, which was the highest display of divine grace, ineffectual, and so prevent his having that glory, which he designed to bring to his own name thereby.

(2.) As to what is farther argued, concerning the covenant of grace being a better covenant than that which God made with man in innocency, and therefore that the conditions thereof must be in our own power, otherwise God, by insisting on the performance of what is impossible, subverts the design of the gospel, and the covenant hereupon ceases to be a covenant of grace ; it may be replied that though we freely own that the covenant of grace is, in many respects, better than that which God entered into with man in innocency, and that it would not be so were it impossible for those, who are concerned therein, to attain the blessings promised to the heirs of salvation ; yet we cannot allow that it must necessarily be conditional, in the sense in which some understand the word, much less that the conditions thereof are in our own power, or else the design of the gospel must be concluded to be subverted.

Therefore we may take leave to observe, that when God is said to require faith, and all other graces in this covenant-dispensation, and has connected them with salvation, this does not overthrow the grace of the covenant, but rather establish it ; for grace and salvation are not only purchased for, but promised and secured to all who are redeemed, by the faithfulness of God, and the intercession of Christ and shall certainly be applied to them ; and whereas, the graces of the Spirit are not in our own power, this is so far from overthrowing the design of the gospel, that it tends to advance the glory thereof, as God hereby takes occasion to set forth the exceeding riches of his grace, in making his people meet for, and bringing them, at last, to glory. And, though it be not possible for all to attain salvation, this should be no discouragement to any one to attend on those means of grace, under which we are to hope for the saving effects of Christ's death, whereby we may conclude that eternal life is purchased for us, and we shall at last be brought to it.

\* See Page 190, ante.

† See Vol. I. Page 477, 480

(3.) As to what is farther alleged, concerning the covenant of grace, as designed to repair the ruins of the fall, or God's intending hereby to bring man into a salvable state; we are never told, in scripture, that what was lost by our first apostasy from God, is to be compensated by the extent of grace and salvation to all mankind; and it is not the design of the gospel to discover this to the world, but that the exceeding riches of divine grace should be *made known to the vessels of mercy, before prepared unto glory*, Rom. ix. 23. This is, as some express it, the plank that remains after the ship-wreck,\* or the great foundation of our hope, and possibility of escaping everlasting destruction; and it is a much better ground of security, than to lay the whole stress of our salvation on the best improvements of corrupt nature, or those endeavours which we are to use, to improve the liberty of our will, in order to our escaping ruin, without dependance on the divine assistance; which is the method that they take to attain salvation, who thus defend the doctrine of universal redemption.

(4.) As for our being brought into a salvable state by the death of Christ; the gospel no where gives all mankind ground to expect salvation, but only those who have the marks and characters of Christ's redeemed ones; and these are not brought by his death unto a mere possibility of attaining it, but the scripture represents them as having the *earnest, or first-fruits* thereof, and speaks of *Christ in them*, as the *hope of glory*, Eph. i. 14. Rom. viii. 23. They are also said to be *reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, chap. v. 10. which is more than their having a bare possibility of salvation, as the result and consequence thereof.

(5.) That which is next to be considered, is, what concerns the doctrine of particular redemption, as being derogatory to the divine perfections, together with many absurd consequences, which are supposed to attend it. It is very common, in all methods of reasoning, and particularly in defending or opposing the doctrine of universal redemption, for persons to endeavour to make it appear, that the contrary scheme of doctrine is chargeable with absurdities; and, as we have taken the same method in opposing universal redemption, it may reasonably be expected, that the doctrine of particular redemption should have many absurd consequences charged upon it; to which we shall endeavour to reply, that thereby it may be discerned whether the charge be just or no. And,

1. The doctrine of particular redemption is supposed to be inconsistent with the goodness of God, as it renders salvation impossible to the greatest part of mankind, and their state irre-

\* *Tabula post naufragium.*



trievable by any means that can be used, and so has a tendency to lead them to despair. But to this it may be replied,

1st, That it must be owned, that they, for whom Christ did not die, cannot be saved; and therefore, had God described any persons by name, or given some visible character, by which it might be certainly concluded that they were not redeemed, it would follow from thence, that their state would be desperate. But this is not his usual method of dealing with mankind: he might, indeed, have done it, and then such would have been thereby excluded from, and not encouraged to attend on the means of grace; but he has, in wisdom and sovereignty, concealed the event of things, with respect hereunto, from the world; and therefore there is a vast difference between men's concluding that a part of the world are excluded from this privilege; and that they themselves are included in that number: the latter of which we have no warrant to say, concerning ourselves, or any others, especially so long as we are under the means of grace. There is, indeed, one character of persons in the gospel, which gives ground to conclude that Christ did not die for them, and that is what respects those who had committed the unpardonable sin. I shall not, at present, enter into the dispute, whether that sin can now be committed or no, since we may be occasionally led to insist on that subject under another head; but there seems to be sufficient ground to determine, either that this cannot be certainly known, since the extraordinary gift of discerning of spirits is now ceased; or, at least, that this cannot be applied to any who attend on the means of grace with a desire of receiving spiritual advantage thereby.

2dly, If Christ's not dying for the whole world be a means to lead men to despair, as salvation is hereby rendered impossible, this consequence may, with equal evidence, be deduced from the supposition, that all mankind shall not be saved, which they, who defend universal redemption, pretend not to deny: but will any one say, that this supposition leads men to despair? or ought it to be reckoned a reflection on the divine goodness, that so many are left to perish in their fallen state, by the judicial hand of God, which might have applied salvation unto all, as well as purchased it for all mankind?

2. The doctrine of particular redemption is farther supposed to be inconsistent with the preaching the gospel, which is generally styled a door of hope; and then the dispensation we are under cannot be called a day of grace; which renders all the overtures of salvation made to sinners illusory, and contains in it a reflection, not only on the grace of God, but his holiness.

In order to our replying to this, something must be premised to explain what we mean by a day of grace, and the hope of the gospel, which accompanies it. And here let it be considered,

(1.) That we hereby intend such a dispensation in which sinners are called to repent and believe, and so obtain salvation; not that we are to suppose that it is to be attained by their own power, without the special influences of the Holy Ghost, for this would be to ascribe that to man, which is peculiar to God; nor that God would give his special grace to all that sit under the sound of the gospel; for this is contrary to common observation and experience, since many make a profession of religion who are destitute of saving grace.

As for the hope of the gospel, or that door of hope that is opened therein to sinners, we cannot understand any thing else thereby, but that all, without distinction, are commanded and encouraged to wait on God in his instituted means of grace, and the event hereof must be left to him who gives and withholds success to them, as he pleases. All have this encouragement, that, peradventure they may obtain grace, under the means of grace; and this is not inconsistent with their being styled a door of hope, and God is not obliged to grant sinners a greater degree of hope than this, to encourage them to wait on him in his ordinances, notwithstanding there is a farther motive inducing us hereunto, namely, that this is his ordinary way, in which he works grace; or, if God is pleased to give us desires after the efficacy of his grace, or any degree of conviction of sin and misery; this is still a farther ground of hope, though it fall short of that grace of hope that accompanies salvation.

(2.) As to what concerns the preaching of the gospel, and the overtures of salvation to all therein, which, upon the supposition of Christ's not dying for all men, they conclude to be illusory, and repugnant to the holiness of God. To this it may be replied, that we do not deny that in preaching the gospel, Christ is offered to the chief of sinners, or that the proclamation of grace is made public to all, without distinction: but this will not overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, if we rightly consider what is done, in offering Christ to sinners; which, that it may be understood, let it be observed,

1st, That God has given us no warrant to enter into his secret determinations, respecting the event of things, so as to give any persons ground to conclude that they are redeemed, and have a warrant to apply to themselves the promise of salvation, or any blessings that accompany it, while in an unconverted state. Ministers are not to address their discourses to a mixed multitude of professing Christians, in such a way, as though they knew that they were all effectually called, and chosen of God. Our Saviour compares them to *the faithful and wise steward*, whose business it is to *give every one their portion of meat in due season*, Luke xii. 42. and therefore they are, consistently with what is contained in scripture, to tell them, that

salvation is purchased for a part of mankind, and they know not but that they may be of that number, which will be an evidence to them that they are so.

2dly, When Christ is said to be offered to sinners, in the preaching of the gospel, that, which is intended thereby, is his being set forth therein as a most desirable object, altogether lovely, worthy to be embraced, and submitted to; and not only so, but that he will certainly save all whom he effectually calls, inasmuch as he has purchased salvation for them.

3dly, It includes in it an informing sinners, that it is their indispensable duty and interest to believe in Christ, and in order thereto, that they are commanded and encouraged to wait on him for that grace, which can enable them thereunto: and, as a farther encouragement, to let them know that there is a certain connexion between grace and salvation; so that none, who are enabled, by faith, to come to Christ, shall be cast out, or rejected by him. This is the preaching and hope of the gospel; and, in this sense, the overtures of salvation are made therein; which is not in the least inconsistent with the doctrine of particular redemption.\*

*Object.* Though this be such a method of preaching the gospel, as is consistent with the doctrine of special redemption; yet there is another way of preaching it, which is more agreeable to the express words of scripture, and founded on the doctrine of universal redemption; and accordingly sinners ought to be told, that the great God, in the most affectionate manner, expostulates with them, to persuade them to accept of life and salvation, when he represents himself, as *having no pleasure in the death of the wicked*, and, with an earnestness of expression says, *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Therefore the design of the gospel is, to let the world know that God's dealing with mankind, in general, are full of goodness; he would not have any perish, and therefore has sent his Son to redeem them all, and, as the consequence hereof, pleads with them to turn to him, that they may reap the benefits purchased thereby.

*Ansiv.* Whatever be the sense of these expostulatory expressions, which we frequently meet with in scripture, we must not suppose that they infer, that the saving grace of repentance is in our own power; for that is not only contrary to the sense of many other scriptures, but to the experience of every true penitent, whose language is like that of Ephraim, *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned*, Jer. xxxi. 18. nor must we conclude, that God designs to save those that shall not be saved; for then he could not say, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all*.

\* See this insisted on, and farther explained, in answer to an objection to the same purpose, against the doctrine of particular election, in Vol. I. page 508, 509.



*my pleasure*, Isa. xlv. 10. If these ideas, as unworthy of God, be abstracted from the sense of such-like scriptures, we may understand them, not only in a way that is consistent with the divine perfections, but with the doctrine of particular redemption; which, that it may appear, let it be considered, that it is a very common thing, in scripture, for God to condescend to use human modes of speaking, and those, in particular, by which various passions are set forth; notwithstanding, we must not conclude that these passions are in God as they are in men. Such expostulations as these, when used by us, signify, that we earnestly desire the good of others, and are often warning them of their danger: but all is to no purpose, for they are obstinately set on their own ruin, which we can by no means prevent; it being either out of our power to help them, or, if we could, it would not redound to our honour to do it. This draws forth such-like expostulations from men; but the weakness contained in them, is by no means to be applied to God: it cannot be said to be out of his power to give grace to impenitent sinners; nor, in case he has so determined, will it tend to his dishonour to bestow it. Now, that we may understand the sense of these scriptures, let it be considered,

1. That *life* and *death*, in scripture, are oftentimes used to signify the external dispensations of providence, as to what concerns that good or evil, which God would bring on his people: thus it is said, *See, I have set before thee this day, life and good, death and evil*, Deut. xxx. 15, 19, 20. where *life* is explained in the following words, as signifying their being *multiplied and blessed in the land, whither they were to go to possess it*; and when God advises them in a following verse, *to choose life*, the consequence of this is, that *both they and their seed should live, that they might dwell in the land, which the Lord sware to their fathers to give them*; and elsewhere, when God says, by the prophet Jeremiah, *I set before you the way of life, and the way of death*, Jer. xxi. 8. he explains it in the following words, as containing an expedient for their escaping temporal judgments, when he says, *He that abideth in the city, shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans, shall live*. And I cannot see any reason to conclude, but that many other expressions, of the like nature, in which God promises life, or threatens death to the house of Israel, by the prophets, who often warned them of their being carried into captivity, and dying in their enemies' land, have a more immediate respect thereunto; and that proverbial expression, which the Israelites are represented as making use of, *The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens' teeth are set on edge*, Ezek. xviii. 2. seems to intimate no more than this; *q. d.* that our fathers have sinned, and

thereby deserved that the nation should be ruined by being carried captive, and we must suffer for their sins ; in answer to which, God tells them, that this proverb should not be used by them, but this evil should be brought on them for their own iniquities, or prevented by their reformation, namely, by forsaking their *idolatry, whoredom, violence, oppression*, and other abominations. And then he adds, ver. 12, 13, 17, 18. *the soul that sinneth, it shall die*, that is, if you continue to commit these vile enormities, you shall be followed with all those judgments which shall tend to your utter ruin ; but *if the wicked will turn from all his sins which he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die*, ver. 21. If this be the sense of these and such-like texts, then it was not wholly out of their own power thus to turn to God, how much soever that special grace, which accompanies salvation, be out of our power. It is one thing to say, that man cannot work a principle of grace in himself, or to do that by his own power, which is the special gift and work of the Spirit of God, and, as the consequence thereof, have ground to expect eternal salvation ; and another thing to say, that he cannot abstain from some gross enormities, as an expedient to prevent desolating judgments. But if it will not be allowed that this is the sense of all those scriptures, that promise or threaten *life or death*, which I do not pretend peremptorily to assert, let it be farther added,

2. That if spiritual and eternal blessings be included in the word *life*, and the contrary in *death*, in the scriptures but now referred to, we may account for the sense of them, without supposing that God designs what shall never come to pass, to wit, the universal salvation of mankind, though a part of them shall not be saved, by considering desire, in him, as signifying the effects of desire in men.\* Thus God's not desiring a thing, denotes it not to be the object of desire ; accordingly when he desires not the death of sinners, it implies, that they ought to endeavour to avoid it, as the most formidable evil ; and, on the other hand, his taking pleasure in a thing, as he does in the salvation of his people, signifies not only his intending to save them, but the inexpressible happiness which they shall attain thereby ; and, when he exhorts them, as an expedient to attain this privilege, *to turn*, this signifies the inseparable connexion between salvation and repentance, or turning to God, which, though it be God's gift, it is, notwithstanding, our act and indispensable duty. Therefore, if we take this, and such-like scriptures, in either of these two senses, they are far from giving countenance to the doctrine of universal redemption.

3. There is another absurd consequence charged upon the doctrine of special redemption, namely, that it is inconsistent

\* *Passiones tribuuntur Deo quoad effectum.*

with our being exhorted and encouraged to *repent and believe for the remission of sins, or to the saving of the soul*, as scripture gives all men a warrant to do, Acts ii. 38. and since all are commanded to exercise these graces, and to expect salvation, as connected therewith, the doctrine of particular redemption, as a late writer insinuates, puts us under a necessity of believing a lie. And he farther adds, that if the condition, annexed to the promise of salvation, be impossible, and known to be so, it gives no encouragement to set about it; and, if he who promises knows it to be so, he promises nothing, because nothing that a person can obtain, or be the better for, whereby he is deluded, and a cheat put upon him, by pretending kindness, in making the promise, and intending no such thing.\* Thus that author represents the doctrine of particular redemption, as containing the most blasphemous consequences that words can express: he must therefore have been very sure that his argument was unanswerably just, though, I hope, we shall be able to make it appear that it is far from being so; which, that we may do, let it be considered,

(1.) That we are to distinguish between a person's being bound to believe in Christ, and to believe that Christ died for him; the first act of faith does not contain in it a person's being persuaded that Christ died for him, but that he is the Object of faith, as he is represented to be in scripture; and accordingly it supposes that we are convinced that Christ is the Messiah, that he purchased salvation for all who shall attain it, and is able to save, unto the utmost, all that come unto God by him; and also, that it is our duty and interest so to do. And, since saving faith is not in our own power, but the work and gift of divine grace, we are encouraged to wait on God in his ordinances, and, with fervent prayer, to beseech him that he would work this grace in us, acknowledging, that if he should deny us this blessing, there is no unrighteousness in him; and we are to continue waiting on him, and using all those means which are in our power, though they cannot attain their end, without his blessings; and, when he is pleased to work this grace in us, we shall be enabled to put forth another act of faith, which is properly saving, as intended by the scripture, which speaks of *believing to the saving of the soul*, which consists in receiving of him, and resting on him for salvation, as hoping that he hath died for us, inasmuch as he hath given us that temper and disposition of soul, which is contained in that character which is given of those for whom Christ died.

(2.) We must farther distinguish between God's commanding all that sit under the sound of the gospel to believe in Christ; and his giving them ground to expect salvation, before

\* See *Whitby's Discourse*, page 145, 146.



they believe in him. Faith and repentance may be asserted to be duties incumbent on all, and demanded of them, when, at the same time, it doth not follow that all are given to expect salvation, upon the bare declaration that they are so. Accordingly the command and encouragement is to be considered in this order; first, as it respects our obligation to believe; and then, as it respects our hope of salvation; and neither the former nor the latter of these does, in the least, infer that God intended to save all mankind, or gave them ground to expect salvation, who do not believe in Christ.

(3.) As to what is farther suggested, concerning salvation's being promised on such conditions, as are known, both by God and man, to be impossible, the only answer that need be given to this, is, that though *with men this is impossible, yet with God all things are possible*, Matt. xix. 26. When we consider faith and repentance, as conditions connected with salvation, or as evincing our right to claim an interest in Christ, and that salvation, which is purchased by him, (in which sense, as was before observed, we do not oppose their being called conditions thereof, by those who are tenacious of that mode of speaking;\* and we do not call them impossible conditions, any otherwise than as they are so, without the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit; we cannot think that our asserting, that it is impossible that all mankind should thus repent and believe, is a doctrine contrary to scripture, which gives us ground to conclude, that all men shall not be saved, and consequently that all shall not *believe to the saving of the soul*. And, when we consider the impossibility thereof, we do not suppose that God has given all mankind ground to expect this saving faith, upon which the blasphemous suggestion, relating to his deluding men, is founded; it is enough for us to say, that God has not told any one, who attends on his ordinances, in hope of obtaining this grace, that he will not give him faith; and more than this need not be desired by persons to induce them to perform this duty, while praying and waiting for the happy event thereof, to wit, our obtaining these graces, and so being enabled to conclude that Christ has died for us.

4. If all the absurdities before mentioned will not take place to overthrow the doctrine of particular redemption, there is another argument, which they, who oppose it, conclude to be unanswerable, namely, that it does not conduce so much to advance the grace of God, as to assert that Christ died for all men, inasmuch as more are included herein, as the objects of divine favour, therefore God is hereby more glorified.

To this it may be replied, that it does not tend to advance the divine perfections, to suppose that God designed to save any

\* See Page 196, 197, ante.

that shall perish, for that would be to argue, as has been before considered, that the purpose of God, with respect to the salvation of many, is frustrated. But, since the stress of the argument is laid on the display of the glory of divine grace; that does not so much consist in the extent of the favour, with respect to a greater number of persons, as it does in its being free and undeserved, and tending, for this reason, to lay the highest obligation on those who are concerned herein, which is the most known sense of the word *grace*.

But inasmuch as it will be objected, that this is only a criticism, respecting the sense of a word, it may be farther replied to it, that if the grace, or goodness of God, be more magnified by universal, than particular redemption, as including more, who are the objects thereof, the same method of reasoning would hold good, and they might as well attempt to prove, that there must be an universal salvation of mankind; for that would be a greater display of divine goodness, than for God only to save a few; and it would be yet more eminently displayed, had he not only saved all mankind, but fallen angels. Shall the goodness of God be pretended to be reflected on, because he does not extend it to all that might have been the objects thereof, had he pleased? Has he not a right to do what he will with his own? And may not his favour be communicated in a discriminating way, whereby it will be more advanced and adored, by those who are the objects thereof, without our taking occasion from thence to reply against him, or say, what dost thou?

And to this it may be added, that they, who make use of this method of reasoning, ought to consider that it tends as much to militate against the doctrine they maintain, namely, that God hath put all mankind into a salvable state, or that Christ, by his death, procured a possibility of salvation for all; which, according to their argument, is not so great a display of the divine goodness, as though God had actually saved all mankind, which he might have done; for he might have given repentance and remission of sins to all, as well as sent his Son to die for all; therefore, upon this head of argument, universal redemption cannot be defended, without asserting universal salvation. Thus concerning those absurdities which are pretended to be fastened on the doctrine of particular redemption; we proceed to consider the last and principal argument that is generally brought against it, namely,

5. That it is contrary to the express words of scripture: and some speak with so much assurance, as though there were not one word in scripture, intimating, that our Lord died only for a few, or only for the elect;\* though others will own, that there

\* See *Whitby's Discourse*, &c. page 113.

are some scriptures that assert particular redemption, but that these are but few; and therefore the doctrine of universal redemption must be acquiesced in, as being maintained by a far greater number of scriptures: but, in answer to this, let it be considered, that it is not the number of scriptures, brought in defence of either side of the question, that will give any great advantage to the cause they maintain, unless it could be made appear that they understood them in the true and genuine sense of the Holy Ghost therein: but this is not to be passed over, without a farther enquiry into the sense thereof, which we shall do, and endeavour to prove that it does not overthrow the doctrine we have been maintaining, how much soever the mode of expression may seem to oppose it; and, in order hereunto, we shall first consider in what sense *all, all men, the world, all the world*, and such-like words are taken in scripture, as well as in common modes of speaking, in those matters that do not immediately relate to the subject of universal redemption; and then we may, without much difficulty, apply the same limitations to the like manner of speaking, which we find in those scriptures which are brought for the proof of universal redemption. Here we are to enquire into the meaning of those words that are used, which seem to denote the universality of the subject spoken of, when nothing less is intended thereby, in various instances, which have no immediate reference to the doctrine of redemption. And,

(1.) As to the word *all*. It is certain, that it is often used when every individual is not intended thereby: thus we read in Exod. ix. 6. that *all the cattle of Egypt died*, when the plague of murrain was inflicted on the beasts; whereas it is said, in the following words, that *none of the cattle of the children of Israel died*; and, from ver. 3. it appears that none of the *Egyptians' cattle died*, save those in *the field*; and it is plain, that there was a great number of cattle that died not, which were reserved to be cut off by a following plague, viz. that of *hail*, in ver. 19. Moreover, it is said, in ver. 25. that *the hail smote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field*; yet we read, in chap. x. 5. of the locusts *eating the residue of that which escaped, and remained unto them from the hail*.

Again, we read, in Exod. xxxii. 3. that *all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which were in their ears*, of which Aaron made the calf, which they worshipped; whereas it is not probable that all wore ear-rings; and it is certain, that all did not join with them, who committed idolatry herein; for the apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of *some of them as being idolaters, who sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*, 1 Cor. x. 7. And some conclude, that those of the tribe of Levi, who *gathered themselves unto Moses, and joined with*



him in executing the vengeance of God on the idolaters, are said to be *on the Lord's side*; not barely because they repented of their idolatry, but because they did not join with the rest in it; and, if this be the sense of the text, yet it does not appear that they were all exempted from the charge of idolatry, though it be said, that *all the sons of Levi were gathered to him*; for we read, in ver. 29. of *every man's slaying his son, and his brother*; and, in Deut. xxxiii. 9. it is said, on this occasion, that *they did not know their fathers, nor their children*, that is, they did not spare them; therefore some of that, as well as the other tribes, joined in the idolatry, though they were all gathered to Moses, as being on the Lord's side.

Again, we read, in Zeph. ii. 14. where the prophet speaks concerning *God's destroying Syria, and making Nineveh desolate*, that *all the beasts of the nations shall lodge in the upper lintels of it*; by which he intends that those beasts, that generally lodge in the wilderness, or in places remote from cities, such as the *cormorant and bittern*, &c. should take up their residence in those places, which were formerly inhabited by the Ninevites; therefore *all the beasts* cannot be supposed to signify all that were in all parts of the world.

Again, the prophet Isaiah, in chap. ii. 2. when speaking of the multitude which should *come to the mountain of the Lord's house*, which he expresses by *all nations coming to it*, explains what is meant by *all nations coming to it*, in the following verse, namely, that *many people should say, Let us go up to the mountain of the Lord*; and the prophet Micah, referring to the same thing, says, in chap. iv. 2. that *many nations shall say, Let us go up to it*, as containing a prediction of what was to be fulfilled in the gospel-day, in those that, out of various nations, adhered to the true religion.

Again, it is said, in 1 Chron. xiv. 17. that the *fame of David went forth into all the lands*, which cannot be meant of those which were far remote, but those that were round about Judea.

Moreover, it is said, in Matt. iii. 5, 6. that *Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to John, and were baptized of him*; which cannot be understood in any other sense, but that a great number of them went out to him for that purpose. And when it is said, in Matt. xxi. 26. that *all men held John as a prophet*, it is not to be supposed that the Scribes and Pharisees, and many others, who cast contempt on him, held him to be so; but that there were a great many who esteemed him as such. And when our Saviour says, in Matt. x. 22. *Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake*, it is certain, that those that embraced Christianity are to be excluded out of their number who hated them. Again, when it is said, in Acts ii. 5. that *there were dwelling at Jerusalem,*

*Jews of every nation under heaven*, it is not to be supposed that there were Jews residing in every nation, who resorted to Jerusalem; upon which occasion, a learned writer\* puts this question, Were there any who resorted there from England or Scotland?

Again, we read, in John iii. 26. that John's disciples came to him, complaining, that *Jesus baptized, and all men came unto him*; by which nothing more is to be understood, but that many, among the Jews attended on his ministry, which were, by far, the smaller part of that nation. By these, and many other scriptures, that might be brought to the same purpose, it appears, that the word *All* sometimes denotes not every individual, but a part of mankind.

(2.) Let us now consider the sense in which we are to understand *the world*, or *all the world*; from whence it will appear, that only a small part of the world is intended thereby in many scriptures: thus the Pharisees said, upon the occasion of a number of the Jews following our Saviour, in John xi. 19. *The world is gone after him*. How small a part of the world was the Jewish nation? and how small a part of the Jewish nation attended on our Saviour's ministry? yet this is called *the world*.

Again, it is said, in Luke ii. 1. *There went out a decree from Augustus, that all the world should be taxed*; by which nothing more is intended than those countries that were subject to the Roman empire; and, in Acts xvii. 26. it is said, that *these that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also*; which cannot be meant in any other sense, but those parts of the world where the apostles had exercised their ministry. And when the apostle tells the church, in Rom. i. 8. that *their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world*, he only means those other churches that were planted in several parts of the world. And, in Acts xi. 28. it is said, that *Agabus signified, by the Spirit, that there should be a great dearth, throughout all the world*; by which nothing is meant but all adjacent countries, which is to be taken in the same sense, as when it is said, in Gen. xli. 51. that *all countries came into Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was so sore in all lands*, that is, in the parts adjacent to Egypt: thus we have sufficient ground to conclude, that *all men, the world, and all the world*, is often taken for a small part of mankind.

But, that we may be a little more particular in considering the various limitations these words are subject to in scripture, as well as in our common modes of speaking, let it be observed,

1st, That sometimes nothing is intended by *all men*, but all sorts of men, without distinction of sex, nation, estate, quality,

\* Vid. Eras. in loc.

and condition, of men in the world : thus the apostle says, in 1 Cor. ix. 19. *I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more* ; this he explains in the following verses, as including men of all ranks and characters : *To the Jews, I became a Jew ; to them that were under the law, as under the law ; to them that were without the law, as without law ; to the weak, I became weak : I became all things to all men, that by any means I might gain some.*

2dly, Sometimes the word All, or *the world*, is taken for the Gentiles, in opposition to the Jews : thus the apostle saith, in Rom. xi. 12. *Now if the fall of them, viz. the Jews, be the riches of the world*, that is, of the Gentiles, as he explains it in the following words ; *And the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness ?* and in ver. 32. he saith, *God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.\**

3dly, *The world* is sometimes taken for those who do not believe, in opposition to the church : thus it is said, in Rev. xiii. 3, 4. *All the world wondered after the beast and they worshipped the dragon* ; which is farther explained, in ver. 8. where it is said, *that all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life* ; and in 1 John v. 19. it is said, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness*, or, as some render it,† *in the wicked one*, as being subject to Satan ; but the church is exempted from that charge, notwithstanding the universality of this expression.

4thly, Sometimes the word All is limited by the nature of the thing spoken of, which is very easy to be understood, though not expressed : thus the apostle in Tit. ii. 9. exhorts *servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things* ; which must be certainly understood as intending all things just, and not contrary to the laws of God, or the civil laws of the land, in which they live.

5thly, The word All is often used, not only in scripture, but in our common modes of speaking, to signify only those, who are the objects of that thing, which is done for them, and then the emphasis is laid on the action, or the person that performs it ; as when we say, all malefactors under a sentence of death, are to be pardoned by the king ; we mean nothing else by it, but that all, who are pardoned, do receive their pardon from him ; or when we say, that virtue renders all men happy, and vice miserable ; we mean, that all who are virtuous are happy, and all who are vicious miserable ; not that virtue, abstracted from the exercise thereof, makes any happy, or vice miserable ; in which case, the word all is not taken for every individual person, but only for those who are either good or bad : and this

\* Συνεκλείσθη γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς τὰς πάντας εἰς ἀπειθείαν, ἵνα τὰς πάντας ἐλεήσει. † ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ.



is agreeable to the scripture-mode of speaking; as when it is said, in Prov. xxiii. 21. *Drowsiness shall clothe a man*, or every man, *with rags*; or sloth reduces all to poverty; not all mankind, but all who are addicted to this vice.

Moreover, it is said, in Psal. cxlv. 14. *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down*; which is not to be understood, as though God keeps all mankind from falling, or raises every individual person, that is bowed down, so as not to suffer him to sink under his burden; but that all who are upheld, or raised up, when bowed down, are made partakers of this privilege by the Lord alone.

Having shewn in what sense the word *All*, or *all the world*, is frequently used in scripture, when not applied to the doctrine of redemption; we shall now consider the application thereof unto it, whereby it may appear, that those scriptures, which are generally brought in defence of the doctrine of universal redemption, do not tend to support it, or overthrow the contrary doctrine that we are maintaining.

1. The first scripture, that is often referred to for that purpose, is 1 John ii. 2. in which it is said, concerning our Saviour, *that he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*. For the understanding of which, we must consider, that it is more than probable that the apostle writes this epistle to the converted Jews, scattered through various countries in Asia, as Peter is said to do, 1 Pet. i. 1. and James, James i. 1. for which reason they are called general epistles; as likewise this of John is, inasmuch as they are not addressed to particular churches among the Gentiles, converted to the faith, as most of the apostle Paul's are. Now, it is plain, that, in the scripture but now mentioned, when these believing Jews are given to understand, that Christ is *a propitiation for their sins, and not for their's only, but for the sins of the whole world*; the meaning is, not for their sins only, who were Jews, but for the sins of the believing Gentiles, or those who were converted by the ministry of the apostle Paul, who is called *the apostle of the Gentiles*. This has been before considered to be the meaning of the word *world* in many scriptures; and so the sense is, that the saving effects of Christ's death redound to all who believe, throughout the world, whether Jews or Gentiles.

2. Another scripture generally brought to prove universal redemption, is, that in Heb. ii. 9. *That he, to wit, Christ, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man*. For the understanding of which, we must have recourse to the words immediately following, which are plainly an illustration thereof; accordingly they, for whom Christ tasted death, are styled *many sons*, who are to be brought to glory; and, in order there-

unto, *Christ, the Captain of their salvation, was made perfect through sufferings*, which is an explication of his being crowned with glory and honour, for the suffering of death; and it plainly proves, that it was for these only that he tasted death, and that by every man, for whom he tasted it, is meant every one of his sons, or of those who are described, in ver. 11. as *sanctified*, and *whom he is not ashamed to call brethren*; and they are further styled, in ver. 13. *The children whom God hath given him*; so that this sense of the words being so agreeable to the context, which asserts the doctrine of particular redemption, it cannot reasonably be supposed that they are to be taken in a sense which has a tendency to overthrow it, or prove that Christ died equally and alike for all men.

3. Another scripture, brought for the same purpose, is 1 Cor. xv. 22. *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. But let it be considered, that the apostle is not speaking directly concerning redemption in this text, but concerning the resurrection of the dead; and, if it be understood of a glorious resurrection unto eternal life, no one can suppose that every individual of mankind shall be made partaker of this blessing, which is also obvious, from what is said in the verse immediately following, where they who are said to be made alive in Christ, are described as such, whom he has a special propriety in, *Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming*; and therefore the meaning is only this, that all of them, who shall be raised up in glory, shall obtain this privilege by Christ, whose resurrection was the first-fruits thereof.

I am sensible that the reason of the application of this scripture to prove universal redemption, is principally taken from the opposition that there seems to be between the death of all mankind in Adam, and the life which is obtained by Christ; and therefore they suppose, that the happiness, which we enjoy by him, is of equal extent with the misery we sustained by the fall of Adam: but, if this were the sense of the text, it must prove an universal salvation, and not barely the possibility thereof; since the apostle is speaking of a privilege that should be conferred in the end of time, and not of that which we enjoy under the gospel-dispensation; accordingly it does not, in the least, answer the end for which it is brought.

4. The next scripture, by which it is supposed that universal redemption may be defended, is that in Rom. v. 18. *As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life*. For the understanding of which scripture, let it be considered, that the blessing, which is said to extend to all, is no less than justification of life, and not merely a possibility of attaining salvation; and, in the foregoing verse,

they, who are interested in this privilege, are said to *receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, and to reign in life by Jesus Christ*. Now certainly this privilege is too great to be applied to the whole world; and, indeed, that which the apostle, in this verse, considers, as being *upon all men unto justification of life*, he explains, when he says, *Many shall be made righteous; therefore this free gift, which came upon all men unto justification*, intends nothing else, but that a select number, who are said to be many, or the whole multitude of those who do, or shall believe, shall be made righteous.

*Object.* If it be objected to this sense of the text, that there is an opposition between that judgment which came by the offence of one, to wit, Adam, upon all men, unto condemnation, and that righteousness, which came upon all men, unto justification; and therefore all men must be taken in the same sense in both parts of the verse, and consequently must be extended to all the world.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that it is not necessary, nor reasonable, to suppose, that these terms of opposition have any respect to the universal extent of condemnation and justification; for the apostle's design is not to compare the number of those who shall be justified, with that of those who were condemned by the fall of Adam; but to compare the two heads together, Adam and Christ, and to shew, that as we are liable to condemnation by the one, so we obtain the gift of righteousness by the other; which is plainly the apostle's method of reasoning, agreeable to the whole scope of the chapter, as may easily be observed, by those who compare these words with several foregoing verses.

5. There is another scripture brought to prove universal redemption, in 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead*; by which it is supposed, that the apostle is here proving that all mankind are dead in sin, and that the medium by which he proves it, is Christ's dying for all men; so that the remedy is as extensive as the disease, and therefore that this is an undeniable proof of universal redemption.

But this is not a true representation of the apostle's method of reasoning; for he designs not to prove that all were dead in sin, but to it. That this may appear, let us consider the connexion of this text with what goes before. The apostle speaks of them, in the foregoing verses, as having assurance of their future salvation, and as *groaning to be clothed upon with their house, which is from heaven*; and as having the *first fruits of the Spirit*, and says that the apostles were made manifest in their consciences, that is, they had something in their own consciences that evinced the success of their ministry to them,



upon which account they had occasion to glory on their behalf; all which expressions denote them to have been in a converted state. And the apostle adds, in ver. 13. *Whether we be beside ourselves, or whether we be sober*, that is, whether we have a greater or less degree of fervency in preaching the gospel, it is for God, that is for his glory, and for your sakes; for the love of Christ, that is, either his love to us, or our love to him, constraineth us hereunto; because we thus judge, that if one, namely, Christ, died for all, that is, for you all, then were all dead, or you all are dead, that is, not dead in sin, but you are made partakers of that communion which believers have with Christ in his death, whereby they are said to be dead unto sin, and unto the world; and the result hereof is, that they are obliged to live not to themselves but to Christ. This seems more agreeable to the design of the apostle, than to suppose that he intends only to prove the fall of man, from his being recovered by Christ, since there is no appearance of any argument to the like purpose, in any other part of the apostle's writings; whereas our being dead to sin, as the consequence of Christ's death, is what he often mentions, and, indeed, it seems to be one of his peculiar phrases: thus he speaks of believers, as *being dead to sin*, Rom. vi. 2. and *dead with Christ*, ver. 8. and elsewhere he says, *You are dead*, Col. iii. 3. that is, you have communion with Christ, in his death, or are dead unto sin; and the apostle speaks of *their being dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world*, chap. ii. 20. that is, if you have communion with Christ, in his death, you are obliged not to observe the ceremonial law, which is called the rudiments of the world; and, in several other places, he speaks of believers being crucified, dead, buried, and risen, from the dead, as having communion with Christ therein, or being made partakers of those benefits which he procured thereby. If, therefore, this be the apostle's frequent method of speaking, why may not we suppose, that in this verse, under our present consideration, he argues, that because *Christ died for them all*, therefore *they were*, or *they are all dead*; \* And, being thus dead, they are obliged, as he observes in the following verse, *not to live to themselves, but to Christ that died for them*, and thereby procured this privilege, which they are made partakers of. If this sense of the text be but allowed to be equally probable with the other, it will so far weaken the force thereof, as that it will not appear, from this scripture, that Christ died for all men.

6. Universal redemption is attempted to be proved, from

\* It may be observed, that as in the scriptures before mentioned, the same word ἀπὸ θανάτου is used in the same tense, namely, the second aorist, which our translators think fit to render in the present tense; and therefore it may as well be rendered here in the present tense, and so the meaning is, *You all for whom Christ died are dead*.

John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:* But, if we understand the world, as taken for the Gentiles, as it is oftentimes in scripture, then the sense of the text seems to be this, which is not inconsistent with special redemption, namely, that the love of God, which was expressed in sending his Son to die for those whom he designed hereby to redeem, is of a much larger extent, as to the objects thereof, than it was in former ages; for it includes in it not only those who believe among the Jews, but whosoever believes in him, throughout the world; not that their believing in him is the foundation, or cause, but the effect of his love, and is to be considered as the character of the persons, who are the objects thereof. In this sense, we are also to understand another scripture, in John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,* that is, of all those whose sins are expiated hereby, throughout the whole world.

7. The doctrine of universal redemption is farther maintained, from our Saviour's words, in John vi. 33. *The bread of God is he that cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world;* which is explained in ver. 51. *I am the living bread, which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world:* But it does not appear, that Christ hereby intends that his death was a price of redemption paid for all mankind; for he speaks of the application of redemption, which is expressed by his giving life, and not barely of his procuring a possibility of its being attained; and they, to whom he gives this privilege, are described as applying it to themselves, by faith, which is doubtless, the meaning of that metaphorical expression, whereby persons are said to *eat of this bread*, or *his flesh*; so that the meaning of this scripture is, that the death of Christ is appointed, as the great means whereby all men, throughout the whole world, who apply it by faith, should attain eternal life: But this cannot be said of all, without exemption; and therefore it does not from hence appear, that Christ's death was designed to procure life for the world.

8. There is another scripture, brought to the same purpose, in Matt. xviii. 11. *The Son of man is come to save that which is lost,* that is, as they suppose, all that were lost; and consequently, since the whole world was brought into a lost state by the fall, Christ came to save them. The whole stress of this argument is laid on the sense that they give of the Greek word\*, which we render, *that which was lost*, whereby they understand every one that was lost; whereas it only denotes, that salvation

\* Το ἀπώλετο.

supposes them, that have an interest in it; to have been in a lost state. And, indeed, the text does not seem immediately to respect the purchase of redemption, or salvation, by Christ's shedding his blood, as a Priest, but the application thereof, in effectually calling, and thereby saving lost sinners. This is illustrated by the parable of *the lost sheep*, (in the following words,) which the shepherd brings back to the fold, upon which occasion he says, that *it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish*. And this farther appears, from our Saviour's using the same mode of speaking, with this addition, that *he came to seek*, as well as to *save*, Luke xix. 9, 10. them, upon the occasion of his converting Zaccheus, and telling him, that *salvation was come to his house*. And this agrees well with that prediction relating to Christ's executing his Prophetical office, in the salvation of his people, as being their Shepherd; in which he is represented, as saying, *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick*, Ezek. xxxiv. 16. Moreover, the parable of the *lost sheep*, which Christ recovered, appears by its connexion with the foregoing verses, to have a particular respect to those *little*, or *humble ones*, that believe in him, who went astray, by reason of some offences that were cast in their way; and therefore, when he had denounced a threatening against those who should offend any of them, and cautioned the world that they should not do this, by despising them, Matt. xviii. 6, 10. he supposes this treatment would cause some of them to go astray; upon which he says, that one of his ends of coming into the world, was to seek, to save, and to recover them.

9. Universal redemption is farther argued, from the universality of divine grace; and accordingly that text is often referred to, in Tit. ii. 11. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men*: But this seems very remote from the sense of the Holy Ghost, in these words; for by *the grace of God* is meant the gospel, that brings the glad tidings of salvation; and its *appearing to all men*, signifies being preached to the Gentiles: or suppose, by *the grace of God*, we understand the display of his grace in the work of redemption, it is not said, that it was designed for, or applied to all men, but only that the publication thereof is more general than it had formerly been. And when the apostle, in ver. 14. speaks more particularly concerning redemption, he alters his mode of expression, and considers it, with its just limitation, with respect to the objects thereof, viz. that *he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. We shall add but one



scripture more, which is brought in defence of universal redemption, viz.

10. That in which the apostle speaks of God, in 1 Tim. iv. 10. *as the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe*; wherein universal redemption is not asserted in the same sense in which they maintain it, viz. that God hath brought all men into a salvable state, so that they may be saved if they will: But the meaning of this scripture is, that *God is the Saviour of all men*, that is, his common bounty extends itself to all, as the Psalmist observes, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psal. cxlv. 9. but he is *more especially the Saviour of them that believe*, inasmuch as they are interested in the special benefits purchased by his redemption, who are said to be *saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation*, Isa. xlv. 17.

There are several other scriptures brought to prove universal redemption, as when it is said, that *God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. and, *The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. which have been before considered \*; and therefore we pass them over at present, and some other scriptures, from whence it is argued, that Christ died for all, because he died for some that shall perish, as when the apostle speaks of some *false teachers, who deny the Lord that bought them*, 2 Pet. ii. 1. and another, *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died*, Rom. xiv. 15. and that in which the apostle speaks of a person *who counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing*, Heb. x. 29. and some other scriptures to the like purpose, the consideration whereof I shall refer to a following answer †, in which the doctrine of the saints' perseverance is defended. (a)

\* See Page 501. Vol. I.

† See Quest. LXXIX.

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(a) "That the atonement is infinitely full or sufficient for all mankind, is evident from the infinite dignity and excellence of the Saviour, and from the nature of the atonement. The Saviour, as has been already observed, was in his divine nature God over all, one with the Father, and equal with him in all divine perfection. And being thus a person of infinite dignity and worth, it gave an infinite value or efficacy to his obedience, sufferings and death, and thus rendered his atonement infinitely full.——"

It appears from express declarations of scripture, that Christ has died for all mankind, or has made an atonement sufficient for all. Thus it is declared, "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man, and that he is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." These passages clearly teach, that the Saviour has died, or made atonement for all mankind, and it seems, that the last of them cannot rationally be understood in any other sense. For it expressly declares, that he is the Saviour, not of those who believe only, but of all men in distinction from these. Therefore his atonement must have had respect to all the human race. Accordingly Christ is called "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world; and the Saviour of the world." The apostle John, addressing christians, says, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for

Thus concerning the first branch of Christ's Priestly office, consisting in his offering himself a sacrifice, without spot, to God, and the persons for whom this was done. We should

ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Here also Jesus Christ is declared to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, in distinction from those of believers. These, and other similar passages teach in the clearest manner, that Christ has made an atonement for all mankind, or for the whole world. It seems hardly possible for words to express this sentiment more clearly than it is expressed in these passages; and some of them will not admit of any other sense, without a very forced, unnatural construction.

Should it be said, that such expressions as *all men*, *the world*, &c. must sometimes be understood in a limited or restricted sense; it may be answered, that it is an established, invariable rule, that all phrases, or passages of scripture are to be understood in their most plain, easy, and literal import, unless the connexion, the general analogy of faith, or some other necessary considerations require a different sense. But in the present case it does not appear, that any of these considerations require, that these passages should be understood in any other than their plain, natural meaning.—

That the atonement is sufficient for all mankind, is evident from the consideration, that the calls, invitations and offers of the gospel are addressed to all, without exception, in the most extensive language. It is said, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Go, and preach the gospel to every creature." The preachers of the gospel are directed to tell their hearers, that all things are ready—that all may come, who will, and are to invite and urge all, to come to the gospel feast and freely partake of the blessings of salvation. But how could the offer of salvation be consistently thus made to all without any limitation; if the atonement was sufficient but for a part or for the elect only? On this supposition it could not with truth and propriety be said to all, that all things are ready, plentiful provisions are made for all, and whosoever will, may come. Were a feast, sufficient but for fifty provided: could we consistently send invitations to a thousand, and tell them that a plentiful feast was prepared, and that all things were ready for their entertainment, if they would but come? Would not such an invitation appear like a deception? If so, then the offer and invitation of the gospel could not have been made to all without discrimination, as they are; if there was no atonement, but for a part. As therefore the invitations of the gospel are thus addressed to all, it is a proof that Christ has made an atonement for all mankind.

Again, the scripture represents, that there is no difficulty in the way of the salvation of the impenitent, but what arises from their own opposition of heart or will. Thus the Lord Jesus says to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children—and ye would not." In the parable of the marriage supper, it is represented, that there was no difficulty in the way to prevent those who were invited, from partaking of the feast, but their own unwillingness to come. But if there was no atonement made but for those only who are saved; then there would be an insurmountable difficulty in the way of the salvation of all others, aside from the one arising from their own opposition of heart. As therefore the scripture teaches, that there is no difficulty in the way of the salvation of any under the gospel, but what arises from their own unwillingness, or wicked opposition of heart, it is manifest, that there is an atonement for all.

The word of God teaches, that it is the duty of all, who are acquainted with the gospel, to believe in the Lord Jesus, and trust in him as their Redeemer, and that they are very criminal for neglecting to do this. It is therefore declared in the sacred scriptures, that it is the command of God, "that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and that those, who believe not, are con-

now proceed to consider the second branch thereof, consisting in his making continual intercession for them, for whom he offered up himself: But, this being particularly insisted on in a following answer \*, we shall pass it over at present, and proceed to consider the execution of his Kingly office.

QUEST. XLV. *How doth Christ execute the office of a King?*

ANSWER. Christ executeth the office of a King, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them, in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their own good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

A KING is a person advanced to the highest dignity; in this sense the word is used in scripture, and in our common acceptation thereof, as applied to men; and more particularly it denotes his having dominion over subjects, and therefore it is a relative term; and the exercise of this dominion is confined within certain limits: But, as it is applied to God, it denotes universal dominion, as the Psalmist says, *God is King of all the earth*, Psal. xlvii. 7. in this respect therefore, it is properly a divine perfection. That which we are led to consider, in this answer, is how Christ is more especially styled a King, as

\* See Quest. LV.

damned already, because they have not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

It is manifest from the various reasons which have been suggested, that the atonement of Jesus Christ is infinitely full, or sufficient for the salvation of all mankind, if they would but cordially receive it, and that the want of such an atonement, is not the reason, why all are not saved. —

It will no more follow, that all will be saved, because the atonement is sufficient for all, than it would, that all would eat of the marriage supper in the parable, because it was sufficient for all, and all were invited. This parable was designed to represent the gospel and its invitations.—As those, who neglected the invitation, never tasted of the supper, although the provisions were plentiful for all; so the scriptures teach, that many will not comply with the terms and invitations of the gospel, and partake of its blessings, although the atonement is abundantly sufficient for all. For the Saviour declares, that "many are called, but few are chosen, and strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

CONNECTICUT EVANG. MAG.

Such interpretation of Scripture does not require the admission that the atonement was absolutely indefinite. Christ might know his sheep and die for them, and yet, by the same covenant or purpose procure terms for others which he knew they would reject.



**Mediator.** Divines generally distinguish his kingdom into that which is natural, and that which is Mediatorial; the former is founded in his deity, and not received by commission from the Father, in which respect he would have been the Governor of the world, as the Father is, though man had not fallen, and there had been no need of a Mediator; the latter is, what we are more especially to consider, namely, his Mediatorial kingdom, which the Psalmist intends, when he represents the Father, as saying, *Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion*, Psal. ii. 6.

The method in which we shall speak concerning Christ's Kingly office, shall be by shewing who are the subjects thereof; the manner of his governing them; and the various ages in which this government is, or shall be exercised; together with the different circumstances relating to the administration of his government therein.

I. Concerning the subjects governed by him. These are either his *people* or his *enemies*; the former of these are, indeed, by nature, enemies to his government, and unwilling to subject themselves to him, but they are made willing in the day of his power, are pleased with his government, and made partakers of the advantages thereof; the latter, to wit, his enemies are forced to bow down before him, as subdued by him, though not to him; so that, with respect to his people and his enemies, he exercises his government various ways. Which leads us to consider,

II. The manner in which Christ exercises his Kingly government; and that,

*First*, With respect to his people. This government is external and visible, or internal and spiritual; in the latter of which he exerts divine power, and brings them into a state of grace and salvation. The Church is eminently the seat of his government, which will be farther observed under a following answer\*; and therefore, at present we shall only consider them as owning his government, by professing their subjection to him, and thereby separating themselves from the world; and Christ governs them, as is observed in this answer, by giving them officers, laws, and censures, and many other privileges, which the members of the visible church are made partakers of; of which more in its proper place.

That which we shall principally consider, at present, is Christ's exercising his spiritual and powerful government over his elect, in those things that more immediately concern their salvation. And here we may observe,

1. Their character and temper, before they are brought, in a saving way, into Christ's kingdom. There is no difference

\* See Quest. LXII, LXIII.

between them and the rest of the world, who are the subjects of Satan's kingdom; their hearts are by nature, full of enmity and rebellion against him, and they are suffered sometimes to run great lengths in opposing his government, and their lives discover a fixed resolution not to submit to him, whatever be the consequence thereof: *Other lords*, says the church, *have dominion over them*, Isa. xxvi. 13. *they serve divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3. *walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*, Eph. ii. 2. and some of them have reason to style themselves, as the apostle Paul says he was before his conversion, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Sometimes, indeed, they meet with some checks and rebukes of conscience, which, for a while, put them to a stand; and they seem inclinable to submit to Christ, as being afraid of his vengeance, or their own consciences suggest the reasonableness thereof; and this issues in some hasty resolutions, arising from the terror of their own thoughts, or the prospect of some advantage, which will accrue to them thereby, whereby their condition may be rendered better than what they, at present, apprehend it to be; and this extorts from them a degree of compliance with the gospel-overture, especially if Christ would stoop to those terms, which corrupt nature is willing to conform itself to; or make those abatements, that would be consistent with their serving God and mammon. In this case, they are like the person whom our Saviour mentions, who being called, replies, *I go, Sir, and went not*, Matt. xxi. 30. Sometimes they promise that they will submit hereafter, if they may but be indulged in their course of life for the present, and, like Felix, would attend to these matters at a more convenient season; or, as one is represented, desiring our Saviour that he might *first go and bury his father*, Matt. viii. 21. by which we are not to understand his performing that debt, which the law of nature obliged him to perform to a deceased parent, which might have been soon discharged, and been no hindrance to his following Christ: but he seems to be desirous to be excused from following him till his father was dead, and all this with a design to gain time, or to ward off present convictions, his domestic affairs inclining him not immediately to subject himself to Christ, or to take up his lot with him, or to forsake all and follow him, though he was not insensible that this was his duty. This is the temper and character of persons before they are effectually persuaded to submit to Christ's government; and the consequence hereof is oftentimes their not only losing their convictions, but returning with stronger resolutions to their former course, and adding greater degrees of rebellion to their iniquity.

2. There are several methods used, by Christ, to bring sin-

ners into subjection to him ; some of which are principally objectionable, and, though not in themselves sufficient, yet necessary to answer this end. Accordingly,

(1.) He gives them to understand that there is an inevitable necessity of perishing, if they persist in their rebellion against him, as our Saviour says, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*, Luke xiii. 3. or, as it is said elsewhere, *Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?* Job ix. 4. and that the consequence thereof will be, that *those his enemies that would not that he should reign over them, shall be brought forth, and slain before him*, Luke xix. 27. And this is not only considered in a general way, as what other sinners are given to expect, but impressed on the conscience, and particularly applied to himself, whereby he is convinced that his present course is not only dangerous, but destructive, and fills him with that distress and concern of soul, which is the beginning of that work of grace, that shall afterwards be brought to perfection.

(2.) Christ holds forth his golden sceptre, and makes a proclamation to sinners to return and submit to him, and, at the same time, expresses his willingness to receive all that by faith, close with the gospel-overture, and cast themselves at his feet with sincere repentance : thus he says, *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37. and, how vile soever they have been, their unworthiness shall not be a bar to hinder his acceptance of them.

(3.) He also shews them their obligation to obey and submit to him, as their rightful Lord and Sovereign, who claims divine *worship* from them, Psal. xlv. 11. and what unanswerable engagements they are laid under hereunto, from all that he did and suffered in life and death, whereby he not only expressed the highest love, but purchased to himself a peculiar people, who must own him as their King, if they expect to reap the blessed fruits and effects of his purchase, as a Priest : this Christ convinces them of. And,

(4.) He represents to them the vast advantages that will attend their subjection to his government, as they shall not only obtain a full and free pardon of all their past crimes, and be taken into favour as much as though they had never forfeited it, but he will confer on them all those graces that accompany salvation, and advance them to the highest honour ; upon which account they are said to be made *kings and priests unto God*, Rev. i. 6. yea, he will grant them *to sit with him in his throne*, Rev. iii. 21. not as sharing any part of his Mediatorial glory, but as being near to him that sits on the throne, and having all those tokens of his regard to them that are agreeable to their condition, or the relation they stand in to him, as subjects. He



presents to their view all the promises of the covenant of grace, which are in his hand, to accomplish, and gives them ground to expect all the blessings he hath purchased, assures them that he will admit them to the most delightful and intimate communion with himself here; that he *will keep them from falling*, and, in the end, *present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*, Jude, ver. 14. and as for their past follies, ingratitude, and rebellion against him, he tells them, that these shall be passed over, and *not laid to their charge*, Rom. viii. 33. for their confusion and condemnation, how expedient soever it may be for him to bring them to their remembrance, to humble them, and enhance their love and gratitude to him, who will, notwithstanding, forgive them.

(5.) He gives them to understand what duties he expects from them, and what are the laws that all his subjects are obliged to obey, and accordingly that he will not give forth any dispensation or allowance to sin, which is a returning again to folly; neither will he suffer them to make their own will the rule of their actions, or to live as they list, nor to give way to carnal security, negligence, or indifference in his service, but they must be always pressing forwards, running the race he has set before them with diligence and industry, that they *be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises*, Heb. vi. 12. and not only so, *but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. xii. 11. that they must have a zeal for his honour, as those that appear to be in good earnest, and prefer his interest to their own; and that this must be tempered with meekness, lest, whilst they seem to be espousing his cause, they give ground to conclude that the indulging their irregular passions is what they principally design. As for the obedience he demands of them, it must be universal, with their whole heart, and to the utmost of their power; and therefore if the duty enjoined be difficult, they must not say, as some of his followers did, *This is a hard saying, who can hear it?* John vi. 60. but rather, in this case, depend on his grace for strength to enable them to perform it; and, as they are to obey his commanding will, so he tells them they must submit to his providential will, and therein glorify his sovereignty, and reckon every thing good that he does, inasmuch as it proceeds from a wise and gracious hand, and is rendered subservient to answer the best ends, for his glory and their advantage.

Moreover, he tells them, that whatever obedience they may be enabled to perform, they must ascribe the glory thereof not to themselves, but to him, as he is the Author and Finisher of faith, and works in them all those graces that he requires of them. And, when they have thus engaged in his service, and

their faces are turned heaven-ward, he obliges them never to think of returning to their former state and company, or subject themselves to the tyranny they are delivered from: as the angel ordered Lot, when he was escaped out of Sodom, not so much as to look back, as one that had a hankering mind to what he had left behind him; or like the Israelites, who longed for the onions and garlic, and the flesh-pots of Egypt, when they were on their journey towards the good land, which God had promised them. Thus Christ expects that all his subjects should not only obey him, but that they should do this with unfainting perseverance, *as not being of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul*, Heb. x. 39. Thus concerning their present obligations and future advantages, together with the duties they are engaged to perform; or the laws of Christ's kingdom, which he makes known to them, before they are brought into subjection to him.

And to this we may add, that he not only presents to them the bright, but the dark side of the cloud, and sets before them the many difficulties and troubles, they are like to meet with in this world, in common with the rest of his subjects, that they may not hereafter be under any temptation, to complain as though they were disappointed, when things go otherwise than they were given to expect: as with one hand he represents to their view the crown of life; so, with the other, he holds forth the cross, which they must take up and follow him, Matt. xvi. 24. if they would be his disciples. He does not conceal from them the evils they are like to meet with from the world, but tells them plainly, that they must expect to be hated of all men for his name sake, Matt. x. 22. and be willing to part with all things for him, especially if standing in competition with him; so that *he who loveth father or mother, son or daughter, yea, his own life, more than him, is not worthy of him*, ver. 37, compared with Luke xiv. 26. and, that self-denial must be their daily exercise, that no idol of jealousy must be set up in their hearts; no secret or darling lust indulged, as being not only contrary to the temper and disposition of his subjects, and a dishonour to their character, but inconsistent with that supreme love that is due to him alone: he also warns them not to hold any confederacy with his enemies, strictly forbids them to make any covenant with death and hell, and requires that all former covenants therewith should be disannulled and broken, as containing a tacit denial of their allegiance to him.

Thus concerning the methods which Christ useth in an objective way, to bring his people to his kingdom. But these are not regarded by the greatest part of those that sit under the sound of the gospel; nor, indeed, are they effectual to answer this end in any, till he is pleased to incline and enable them,

by his power, to submit to him; he must first conquer them before they will obey. Before this they had no more than an external overture, or representation of things, in which he dealt with them as intelligent creatures, in order to their becoming his subjects out of choice, as having the strongest motives and inducements thereunto: but this is an internal work upon the heart, whereby every thing, that hindered their compliance is removed, and they are drawn by that power, without which none can come unto him, John vi. 44. their hearts are broken, their wills renewed, and all the powers and faculties of their souls inclined to subscribe to his government, as king of saints. This leads us to consider,

3. How persons first express their willingness to be Christ's subjects; what engagements they lay themselves under, and what course they take pursuant thereunto.

(1.) They cast themselves at his feet with the greatest humility and reverence, being sensible of their own vileness and ingratitude, and, at the same time, are greatly affected with his clemency and grace, who, notwithstanding their unworthiness, invites them to come to him; which they do, not as desiring to capitulate, or stand upon terms with him, but they are willing that he should make his own terms, like one that sends a blank paper to his victorious prince, that he might write upon it what he pleases, and expresses his willingness to subscribe it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which Benhadad's servants, when his army was entirely ruined, and he no longer able to make resistance against Ahab, present themselves before him with sackcloth on their loins, and ropes on their heads, in token of the greatest humility, together with an implicit acknowledgment of what they had deserved; and without the usual method of entering into treaties of peace, the only message they were to deliver was, *Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live*, 1 Kings xx. 32. Thus the humble returning sinner implores forgiveness, and a right to his life, as an act of grace, at the hand of Christ, who has been represented to him, as a merciful king, and ready to receive returning sinners.

(2.) This subjection to Christ is attended with the greatest love to, and desire after him, which they express to his person, and his service, as well as those rewards that attend it, being constrained hereunto by that love and compassion, which he hath shewed to them; and by those just ideas which they are now brought to entertain, concerning every thing that belongs to his kingdom and interest.

(3.) They consent to be the Lord's, by a solemn act of self-dedication, or surrender of themselves, and all that they have, to him, as seeing themselves obliged so to do; and therefore



they desire to be his, to all intents and purposes, his entirely, and for ever.

(4.) Since there are many difficult duties incumbent on Christ's subjects, and many blessings which they hope to receive, they express their entire dependance on him for grace, to enable them to behave themselves agreeably to the obligations they are under, that they may not turn aside from him, or deal treacherously with him, as being unsteadfast in his covenant: they also rely on his faithfulness for the accomplishment of all the promises, which afford matter of relief and encouragement to them; and this is accompanied with a fixed purpose, or resolut on to wait on him, in all his ordinances, as means appointed by him, in which they hope to obtain those blessings they stand in need of.

(5.) This is done with a solemn withdrawing themselves from, renouncing and testifying their abhorrence of those to whom they have formerly been in subjection, whose interest is contrary to, and subversive of Christ's government. These they count to be their greatest, yea, their only enemies, and proclaim open war against them, and that with a fixed resolution, by the grace of God, to pursue it to the utmost; like the courageous soldier, who, having drawn his sword, throws away the scabbard, as one that will not leave off fighting till he has gained a complete victory; and this resolution is increased by that hatred which he entertains against sin, and is exercised in proportion to it: the enemies against whom he engages, are the world, the flesh, and the devil; the motives that induce him thereunto are because they are enemies to Christ, and stand in the way of his salvation. Now, that he might manage this warfare with success, he takes to himself the whole armour of God, which the apostle describes, Eph. vi. 11—17. which is both offensive and defensive. And he also considers himself as obliged to shun all treaties or proposals made by them, to turn him aside from Christ, and all correspondence with them, and to avoid every thing that may prove a snare or temptation to him, or tend to Christ's dishonour.

And to this we may add, that he hath a due sense of his obligation, to endeavour to deliver others from their servitude to sin and Satan, to encourage those who are almost persuaded to submit to Christ, and to strengthen the hands of those who are already entered into his service, engaged with him in the same warfare against his enemies, and pursuing the same design, conducive to his glory. The methods he takes in order hereunto, are truly warrantable, and becoming the servants of Christ: he is not like the scribes and Pharisees, who were very zealous to gain proselytes to their interest, which, when they had done, *they made them two-fold more the children of hell than*

*themselves*, Matt. xxiii. 15. but makes it his business to convince those he converses with, that they are subject to the greatest tyranny of those who intend nothing but their ruin; that they serve them who have no right to their service, and, that the only way to obtain liberty, is to enter into Christ's service, and then they will be *free indeed*, John viii. 36. Moreover, he endeavours to remove those prejudices, and answer all objections which Satan usually brings, or furnishes his subjects with, against Christ and his government. If they say, with the daughters of Jerusalem, *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* he has many things to say in his commendation; as, the church is brought in using various metaphorical expressions to set forth his glory, and he joins with them in that comprehensive character given of him, which contains the sum of all that words can express, *He is altogether lovely; this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem*, Cant. v. 9, 16. This concerning the way in which Christ's subjects engage against, and oppose Satan's kingdom.

But let it be further considered, that the opposition is mutual: when persons are delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into Christ's kingdom, they are not to expect to be wholly free from the assaults of their spiritual enemies, and these oftentimes gain great advantages against them from the remainders of corrupt nature, in the best of men. The devil is represented, by the apostle, as a *roaring lion, who walketh about seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. v. 8. Sometimes he gives disturbance to Christ's subjects, by inclining men to exercise their persecuting rage and fury against the church, designing hereby to work upon their fears; at other times, he endeavours, as it were, by methods of bribery, to engage unstable persons in his interest, by the overture of secular advantage; or else to discourage some, by pretending that religion is a melancholy thing, that they who embrace it, are like to strive against the stream, and meet with nothing but what will make them uneasy in the world. This opposition, which is directed against Christ's kingdom, proves oftentimes very discouraging to his subjects; but there are attempts of another nature often used to amuse, discourage, and destroy their peace, by taxing them with hypocrisy, and pretending, that all their hope of an interest in Christ's favour and protection, is but a delusion, and therefore it had been better for them not to have given in their names to him, since the only consequence thereof will be the aggravating their condemnation. If the providences of God be dark and afflictive, he endeavours to suggest to them hard thoughts of Christ, and to make them question his goodness, and faithfulness, and to say, with the Psalmist, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and have washed my hands in inno-*

*gency*, Psal. lxxiii. 13. and, when God is pleased, at any time; for wise ends, to deny them his comforting presence, the enemy is ready, on this occasion, to persuade them, as the Psalmist represents some speaking to the like purpose, that *there is no help for them in God*, Psal. iii. 2.

These means are often used, by the enemies of Christ's kingdom, to weaken the hands of his subjects, whereby the exercise of their graces is often interrupted, and they are hurried into many sins, through the violence of temptation; nevertheless they shall not wholly revolt. Grace may be foiled, and weakened thereby, but it shall not be utterly extinguished; for, though they be guilty of many failures and miscarriages, which discover them to be in an imperfect state, yet they are preserved from relapsing into their former state; and not only so, but are often enabled to prevail against their spiritual enemies, in which the concern of Christ, for their good, eminently discovers itself; and, if the advantage gained against them be occasioned by their going in the way of temptation, or not being on their guard, or using those means that might prevent their being overcome thereby, this is over-ruled by Christ, to the humbling and making them more watchful for the future; or if God has left them to themselves, that he may shew them the sin and folly of their self-confidence, or reliance on their own strength, this shall be a means to induce them to be more dependent on him for the future, as well as importunate with him, by faith and prayer, for that grace, which is sufficient to prevent their total and final apostasy, as well as to recover them from their present back-slidings. And these many weaknesses and defects, which gave them so much uneasiness, will induce them to sympathize with others in the like condition; and the various methods which Christ takes for their recovery, will render them skilful in directing others how to escape, or disentangle themselves from this snare, in which they have been taken, and which has given them so much uneasiness.

We might here have enlarged on that particular branch of this subject, which respects the warfare that is to be carried on by every one who lists himself under Christ's banner, and owns him to be his rightful Lord and Sovereign, which takes up a very considerable part of the Christian life; as he is said to *wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, and against spiritual wickedness in high places*, Eph. vi. 12. and elsewhere we read of *the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh*, Gal. v. 17. But this will be considered under a following answer, in which we shall be led to speak of the imperfection of sanctification in believers,



together with the reasons thereof;\* and therefore we pass it over at present, and shall proceed to consider,

4. How Christ deals with his subjects after he has brought them hitherto, and inclined and enabled them to submit to his government: this is expressed in the answer we are explaining, in the following heads.

(1.) He rewards their obedience. This supposes that he requires that they should obey him, and that their obedience should be constant and universal, otherwise they deserve not the character of subjects; and, as to what concerns the regard of Christ to this obedience, though herein men are not profitable to God, as they are to themselves, or to one another, yet it shall not go unrewarded. The blessings which Christ confers on them are sometimes styled a reward, inasmuch as there is a certain connexion between their duty and interest, or their obeying and being made blessed, which blessedness is properly the reward of what Christ has done, though his people esteem it as an act of the highest favour; in this sense he rewards their obedience, and that either by increasing their graces, and establishing their comforts here; or by bringing them to perfection hereafter. But inasmuch as their obedience is, at present, very imperfect, which tends very much to their reproach, and affords matter of daily humiliation before God, it is farther added,

(2.) That Christ corrects them for their sins. This is inserted among the advantages of his government, though it is certain, that afflictions, absolutely considered, are not to be desired; nevertheless, since they are sometimes *needful*, 1 Pet. i. 6. and conducive to our spiritual advantage, they are included in this gracious dispensation, which attends Christ's government, as *by these things men live*, Isa. xxxviii. 16. How much soever nature dreads them, yet Christ's people consider them as designed for their good, and therefore not only submit to them, but conclude that herein he deals with them. As we are far from blaming the skilful surgeon, who sets a bone that is out of joint, or cuts off a limb, when it is necessary to save our lives, though neither of these can be done without great pain: thus when God visits our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquities with stripes, we reckon that he deals with us as a merciful and gracious Sovereign, and not as an enemy, since his design is to heal our backslidings, and prevent a worse evil from ensuing thereby.

(3.) He preserves and supports his subjects under all their temptations and sufferings. There are two sorts of temptations mentioned in scripture, to wit, such as are merely providential, which are designed as trials of faith and patience; as when the

\* See *Quest. LXXVIII.*

apostle says, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trial of your faith worketh patience*, James i. 2, 3. and elsewhere the apostle Paul, speaking of the persecutions which he met with from the Jews, calls them *temptations*, Acts xx. 19. But, besides these, there are other temptations which arise from sin, Satan, and the world, whereby endeavours are used more directly to draw Christ's subjects from their allegiance to him: thus it is said, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*, James i. 14. and elsewhere, *They that will be rich, that is, who use indirect means to attain that end, or make this the grand design of life, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. vi. 9. and the devil, who has a great hand in managing these temptations, and solicits us to comply therewith, is, for that reason, called, by way of eminency, *the tempter*, 1 Thes. iii. 5. and Matt. iv. 3. In both these respects, believers are exposed to great danger, by reason of temptations, and need either to be preserved from, or supported under them, that they may not prove their ruin; and this Christ does in managing the affairs of his kingdom of grace for his people's advantage, and herein that promise is fulfilled to them, *There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*, 1 Cor. x. 13.

(4.) Christ powerfully orders all things for his own glory, and his people's good, as they are said to *work together for good*, Rom. viii. 28. and herein his wisdom, as well as his goodness, is illustrated. Sometimes, indeed, they cannot see from the beginning of an afflictive providence to the end thereof, or what advantage God designs thereby; herein we may apply those words of our Saviour to Peter, though spoken with another view, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*, John xiii. 7. This will eminently appear, when they shall see how every step which Christ has taken in the management of his government, has had a subserviency to promote their spiritual advantage hereafter. Thus we have considered how Christ executes his Kingly office, more especially towards his people, who are his faithful subjects.

*Secondly*, We are now to speak concerning the exercise of Christ's Kingly government towards his enemies. He is, as has been before observed, their King; not by consent, or voluntary subjection to him, nor do they desire to own his authority, or yield obedience to his laws; but they are, notwithstanding, to be reckoned the subjects of his government; which is exercised,

1. In setting bounds to their power and malice, so that they cannot do what they would against his cause and interest in the world. How far soever he may suffer them to proceed to the disadvantage of his people; yet he is able to crush them in a moment; and, when he sees their rage, and how they set themselves against him with their combined force, and insult, as though they had brought their designs to bear, as not doubting the success thereof, he tells them plainly, that *they imagine a vain thing, and that he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision*, Psal. ii. 1, 4. and the reason is very obvious, because God is greater than man. Though it would be a dishonour to him to say, that he is the author of sin, yet it redounds to his glory, that he sets bounds and limits to it, and over-rules it by his wisdom to his own glory; as it is said, *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*, Psal. lxxvi. 10.

2. Christ has exercised his Kingly government in gaining a victory over his enemies; this he did, when *he spoiled principalities and powers, and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross*. This, indeed, was done by him, when he was in the lowest depths of his sufferings, and, in a more eminent degree, exercised his Priestly office; yet, in some respects, he is said, at that time, to have exercised his Kingly, and that in a very triumphant manner, as it is here expressed; and elsewhere he is said, *through death, to have destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*, Heb. ii. 14. hereby he purchased those restraints which the powers of darkness were brought under more than they were before. Satan's chain was hereby shortened, and his subjects delivered out of his hand, being ransomed by the blood of Christ; and, as the consequence thereof, they were afterwards persuaded to withdraw their necks from that yoke, which they were formerly under, by the power of that grace that attended the preaching of the gospel, whereby they were subjected to Christ's government. Moreover, our Saviour tells his people, that he had *overcome the world*, John xvi. 33. not only because he had in his own Person, escaped the pollution thereof, and not been entangled in its snares, nor hindered in the work he was engaged in, by the afflictions and injurious treatment that he met with from it, but as he procured for them those victories over it, whereby they shall be made *more than conquerors through him that loved them*.

3. Christ's kingly government is, and shall more eminently appear to be exercised towards his enemies, in punishing them for all their rebellions against him. There are reserves of vengeance laid up in store, and more vials of wrath, which shall be poured forth on Satan, and all the powers of darkness, which



they are not without some terrible apprehensions of, from the knowledge they have of God as a just judge; upon which account they are said to believe and tremble, James ii. 19. and as for all his other enemies, he will *break them with a rod of iron; he will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*, Psal. ii. 9. or bring them forth, and slay them before him, Luke xix. 27. Thus concerning the manner how Christ's kingly government hath been exercised, both towards his people and his enemies; and this leads us to consider,

III. The various seasons, or ages, in which Christ's kingly government has been, or shall be exercised, together with the different circumstances relating to the administration of it therein. As soon as ever man fell, and thereby stood in need of a mediator to recover him, Christ was revealed, as one who had undertaken his recovery, and, as a victorious king, who should break and destroy that power, that had brought him into subjection to it. Now there are various periods, or seasons, in which he has executed his kingly office, or shall continue so to do.

1. He did this before his incarnation, during which time his government was visible, as to the effects thereof, as extended to all those who were saved under the Old Testament-dispensation: they were subdued and defended by his divine power, that was then exerted, as well as discharged from condemnation, by virtue of the sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, he was to offer for them. We have already shewed how he executed his prophetic office during this interval;\* now we must consider him as exercising his kingly office. The majestic way in which he delivered the law from mount Sinai, was a glorious display thereof; and the Theocracy, which they were under, which is described, in scripture, as a government distinct from, and excelling all others in glory, and the suberviency of it to their salvation, was a farther evidence that he was their king. This he evinced, at one time, by his appearance to Joshua, as the captain of the Lord's hosts; and at another time it was represented in an emblematical way, when he was seen by the prophet Isaiah, as *sitting upon a throne, and his train filling the temple*. And in the book of Psalms, he is frequently acknowledged by the church as their king; concerning whom it is said, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre*, Psal. xlv. 6. and, in many other places he is described as the *King, the Lord of hosts*, not only as predicting the future exercise of his government, but as denoting what he was at that time; concerning whom it was said, *Is not the Lord in Zion? Is not her King in her?* Jer. viii. 19. And when God declares that he had ad-

\* See Page 257.

vanced him to this mediatorial dignity, and set him on his holy hill of Zion, the kings and judges of the earth are exhorted to serve him with fear, and, in token of their willingness to be his subjects, to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little, Psal. ii. 6, 10, 12.

2. After his incarnation, when he first came into the world, he was publickly owned, by the wise men (who came from the East) as one that *was born King of the Jews*, and the gifts which they presented to him of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, Matt. ii. 2. compared with ver. 11. the best presents that their country afforded, were designed to signify that homage which was due to him, as one whom God had appointed to be the King of his church, though his external mein, and the circumstances of his birth, contained no visible mark of regal dignity. While he conversed with his people, in the exercise of his public ministry, he gave them frequent intimations hereof, when describing the nature of his kingdom, as spiritual, and not of this world; and, when one of his followers addressed him, as *the Son of God*, and *the King of Israel*, he is so far from reproving him, as ascribing to him a glory that did not belong to him, that he not only commends his faith that was expressed herein, but gives him to understand, that he should have a greater evidence of this truth, when *he should see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon him*, John i. 49—51.

And, in the close of his life, when he entered into Jerusalem, with a design to give himself up to the rage and fury of his enemies, providence, as it were, extorted a confession of his regal dignity, from the unstable multitude, and, at the same time designed to fulfil what was foretold by the prophet Zechariah, when he says, *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass*, Zech. ix. 9. and their saying, *Hosannah, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord*, John xii. 13. was the result of a present conviction, which they had of this matter, though it was not long abiding, and hereby they were, as it were, condemned out of their own mouth. And, after this, when Pilate asked him this question, in plain terms, *Art thou the King of the Jews?* he publickly professes himself to be so; nevertheless, he gives him to understand, that his kingdom was *not of this world*, upon this account the apostle says, that *before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession*, and styles him, *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, 1 Tim. vi. 13, 15.

3. Christ still executes his Kingly office in that glorified state, in which he now is. This the apostle intimates, when alluding to the custom of kings in their solemn triumphs over

their enemies, (who throw medals amongst the people to perpetuate the remembrance thereof, and bestow donatives, or peculiar marks of favour upon this occasion) when he speaks of him, as *ascending up on high*, having *led captivity captive*, and then *giving gifts unto men*, Eph. iv. 8. In this exalted state there are undeniable proofs of his regal dignity in the blessings which his church, in this world, receives, as the result of it as well as in the honours that are paid him by the inhabitants of heaven. The Socinians, indeed, will not allow that he executed his Kingly office on earth : but this is contrary to the account we have of his executing it in his humbled state, as above mentioned ; therefore we must suppose, that when Christ entered into his glory, he did not begin to reign ; though, from that time, he has exercised his government in a different manner, upon the account whereof the gospel dispensation, which ensued thereon, is called, by way of eminence, *his kingdom* ; and, because this dispensation began upon his ascension into heaven, it is sometimes called, in the New Testament, *the kingdom of heaven*.

I need not add much concerning the present exercise of his Kingly government, since the greatest part of what has been said, under this answer, has a particular regard to it. It was after his ascension into heaven that the gospel-church was established, which is sometimes called his visible kingdom ; then it was that the laws and ordinances, by which it was to be governed, were made known to it, together with the peculiar privileges that were then bestowed upon it, as the effects of Christ's royal bounty : then the Spirit was sent, and, by his assistance, the gospel was preached to all nations, saving grace plentifully bestowed on multitudes, who were enabled to subject themselves to him, as King of saints ; and, in this manner, Christ has hitherto exercised his Kingly government, and will do until his second coming.

Here we shall take occasion to consider what is advanced, by several, concerning Christ's reigning *a thousand years* on earth, which, they suppose, will intervene between the present administration of the affairs of his kingdom, and the saints reigning with him in heaven for ever. This opinion has not only the countenance of many ancient writers, who have defended it, but it seems to be founded on several scriptures ; so that we shall be led, in considering this subject, rather to enquire into the true sense of those scriptures, that speak of Christ's reigning on earth, than to deny that he will, in any sense, reign therein, in a way circumstantially different from that in which he now administers the affairs of his kingdom. And here we shall consider what is advanced, by some, concerning this matter, who assert many things relating thereunto,



which stand in need of stronger arguments to defend them, than have hitherto been brought; and then we shall consider how far we have ground, from scripture, to say, that Christ shall reign here on earth, and all his saints that shall live therein, with him, and what we may conclude to be the true sense of those scriptures that are brought in defence of Christ's personal reign.

The opinions of those that treat on this subject, are so different, that to speak distinctly to them all, would be too great a diversion from my general design: and this also renders it more difficult, to lay down the state of the question in a few words. However, I shall briefly attempt this; and, that we may proceed with greater clearness, shall consider what is asserted, by several writers, concerning Christ's personal reign on earth, which shall be in the latter end of the world, and is to continue, from the time that it commences, *a thousand years*.

(1.) Some have supposed, that this *thousand years'* reign includes in it the whole compass of time, in which Christ shall judge the world. This is called, indeed, in scripture, *a day*; but it cannot reasonably be supposed that it shall take up no more than the space of twenty-four hours; and therefore they suppose, that it shall contain the space of *a thousand years*, which they found partly on that scripture, in Psal. xc. 4. *A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past*; and more especially on the apostle's words, in 2 Pet. iii. 8. *One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day*; and this they apply, in particular to the day of judgment, which is spoken of in the verse immediately foregoing; and, since we have ground to conclude that this shall be done on earth, and also, that, when Christ judges the world, it may be truly said, he exercises his Kingly office in a most glorious manner; therefore they conclude, from hence, that this thousand years' reign includes in it all the time that he will take up in judging the world: but, even in this matter, all do not agree in their sentiments; for some think, that, in this judicial process, none are to be judged but the saints, who, being acquitted by him, are said to reign with him; and, in order hereunto, that they shall be raised from the dead, which they suppose to be meant by the *first resurrection*, and that the rest shall not be raised till the thousand years are finished, Rev. xx. 5. But this seems not agreeable to the account we have elsewhere, in scripture, of Christ's raising the dead, coming to judgment, and determining the state, both of the righteous and wicked, as what is to be done in or near the same time, each of these being distinct branches of the same solemnity. And that which makes this opinion still more improbable, is, because in the same scripture in which we have an account of

this thousand years' reign, it immediately follows, that, when these years shall be expired, Satan will be loosed out of his prison, and suffered *to deceive the nations*; and then we read of other enemies which the church shall have, concerning whom it is said, that *they shall be gathered together to battle*; and it is farther said, that *they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city*; and all this is to be done between the end of the *thousand years reign* and the general judgment, when *the dead, small and great, shall be raised, the books opened, and all judged out of those things that are written therein, according to their works*; therefore this opinion concerning the thousand years' reign, including in it the time in which Christ shall appear, in this lower world, to judge his saints, does not seem to be the sense of that scripture on which this opinion is supposed to be founded, Rev. xx. 12.

(2.) The more common opinion, which is defended by several ancient and modern Chiliasts, or Millenarics, as they are generally called, is, that our Lord Jesus Christ shall, some time in the last days, before he comes to the final judgment, appear in this lower world, in his human nature, and dwell and reign among the inhabitants thereof, in such a way, as may render it a kind of middle state between that which the church is now in, and heaven; more glorious than the former, and yet very much inferior to the latter. And here they suppose,

1st, That there are several things which shall go immediately before it, as tending to usher in the glory of that kingdom, to wit, the conversion of the Jews, which is to be effected at once. And, in order hereunto, some conclude that the dispensation of miracles shall be revived; which they argue from hence, in that all the remarkable changes that have formerly been made in the affairs of the church, have been introduced by miracles; and the Jews, more than any other nation in the world, have been desirous of a conviction by such a method as this.

Moreover, it is also supposed, that, at the same time, those scriptures that foretel a greater fulness of the Gentiles, or the conversion of many, who still remain in the darkness of heathenism, shall have their accomplishment in an eminent degree; and this shall also proceed from, and be attended with a greater degree of the effusion of the Spirit, and the consequence hereof will be a more glorious light shining throughout the world, than has ever done; and that these two, the Jews and Gentiles, shall be both joined together, in one body, under Christ, their visible and glorious Head.

Moreover, some suppose, that Jerusalem, and the countries round about it, shall be the principal seat of this kingdom, to

which these new converts shall repair ; so that, as there the glorious scene of the gospel was first opened, in that part of the earth, the glory of Christ's personal reign shall begin. Others, to this, add, that, at this time, the temple at Jerusalem shall be built, which shall far exceed that which was built by Solomon, in glory ; and that the *New Jerusalem* shall be also *built* and adorned in a magnificent way, agreeable to what is said of it in scripture, Rev. xxi. which they understand in a literal sense. In this I must take leave to differ from them, though not in what was but now hinted, concerning the conversion of the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles going before it.

2dly, Though some suppose that the general conflagration, spoken of by the apostle Peter, 2 Pet. iii. 7, 13. shall be after this thousand years reign, which is certainly the more probable opinion ; yet others have concluded, that it shall be before it and that *the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, which believers according to God's promise look for, shall arise out of the ruins of the old. Thus a late writer says,\* who advances many things concerning the ante-diluvian world, as well as this new one, with an elegancy of style, that is very entertaining, and, in many instances, runs counter to the sentiments of all that went before him, than which a more ingenious romance is hardly extant : but since, for the most part, he brings in scripture to give countenance to what he advances, and lays down a peculiar scheme concerning this Millennium, I cannot wholly pass it over. He supposes, that the reign of Christ, on earth, shall be ushered in by a general conflagration, in which all the inhabitants thereof must necessarily be consumed, and the world reduced into a second chaos by fire ; and, as his master De Cartes describes the form of the world when first created, and how the various particles of matter were disposed, in order to its being brought to that perfection to which it arrived afterwards, so he describes the form to which the world shall be framed ; which, when done, being at a loss to find out inhabitants for it, he supposes that the dead shall be raised : to which he applies what is said in scripture concerning the *first resurrection*, and then this thousand years reign begins : but he is more at a loss, as might easily be supposed, to account for Gog and Magog, the enemies of the church, which shall give it great disturbance at the close thereof ; and, since he cannot easily suppose them to be raised from the dead for this end, he fancies that they shall spring out of the earth ; which so much embarrasses his scheme, that, whatsoever scriptures he brings in defence of it, it must be supposed by impartial judges, to be attended with the greatest absurdities.

\* Vid. Burnet. Tellur. Theor. Lib. iv.



3dly, There are others, who suppose that the general conflagration shall not be till the end of the thousand years reign; nevertheless they conclude, that the dead shall be raised, and more particularly those who are designed to reign with Christ. And, with respect to this, the sentiments of persons are somewhat different, inasmuch as some suppose that none shall be raised, at this time, but those who have suffered martyrdom for Christ's sake; and that this is the meaning of that expression, *I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God, and they lived and reigned a thousand years*, Rev. xx. 4. Others suppose, that because many, who have not suffered death for Christ's sake, have, in other respects, passed through an equal number of persecutions and reproaches in life, and were ready to suffer martyrdom, had they been called to it, these are not excluded; and therefore that all the saints shall be raised from the dead, as the apostle says, *The dead in Christ shall rise first*, 1 Thess. iv. 16. that is, a thousand years before the wicked; and that this is intended by what is styled the *first resurrection*; they shall rise, not to be received immediately into heaven, but shall be first openly acknowledged, and acquitted by Christ, the Judge of all, and then reign with him on earth, throughout the whole period of time.

4thly, Others suppose, that, during this thousand years' reign, the public ordinances of God's worship, namely, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, and the present order and discipline of churches, shall entirely cease; to which they accommodate the sense of some scriptures, to wit, that in which it is said, concerning the New Jerusalem, that *there was no temple therein that the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it*, Rev. xxi. 22, 23. and elsewhere, when the apostle says, that the church, in celebrating the Lord's Supper, was to *shew forth the Lord's death till he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. they suppose that the meaning is, that they were to do this till he shall come to reign on earth, and no longer.

5thly, There are some who entertain very carnal notions of the saints reigning with Christ, inconsistent with perfect holiness; and speak of pleasures, which they shall then enjoy, that are more agreeable to Mahomet's paradise, than the life of saints, admitted to such privileges, which they suppose them to be partakers of. And some proceed yet farther in their wild and ungrounded fancies, when they think that a small number of the wicked shall be left in the world, to be, as it were, slaves to them; all which are inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. Such extremes as these, many, who, have defended Christ's personal reign on earth, have unwarily run into; among whom there are some ancient writers, who have

led the way to others, who speak of it as the generally received opinion of the fathers in the three first centuries \*; but these are not much to be depended on, as to the sense they give of scripture, any more than those who have lived in latter ages, especially in those things which they advance, that seem to be inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom: But if this account, which they give of it, appear to be contrary thereunto, what they farther say concerning it, and others, who improve upon their scheme, is much more remote from it, when they speak of the building of Jerusalem, and that being the principal seat of Christ's reign; and of several things relating to it, which are of such a nature, and contain so great a reproach on Christ's kingdom, that I forbear to mention them; and there are very few who will think them consistent with the character of saints. This gave disgust to Augustin, who, at first, adhered to this opinion, but afterwards was justly prejudiced against it †.

Thus we have given a brief account of the different sentiments of many, who treat in their writings of Christ's personal reign, of which some are maintained by persons of great worth and judgment, and seem more agreeable to the sense of those scriptures, that are brought to defend them, than others; these ought to be farther considered, that it may appear whether they

\* Justin Martyr seems to speak of it not only as his own opinion, but as that which was generally held by the orthodox in his day, joins the belief hereof with that of the resurrection of the dead, and supposes it to be founded on the writings of some of the prophets. *Vid. Justin Martyr Dialog. cum Tryph. Jud. page 307.* Ἐγὼ δὲ, καὶ οἱ πάντες εἰσι ἐρητογνημονες κατὰ πάντα Χριστιανοί, καὶ σαρὸς ἀνὰ σὸν γέννησθαι ἐπιστάμεθα, καὶ χίλια ἐν ἡ ἱερουσαλὴμ οἰκοδομηθῆσιν καὶ κοσμηθῆσιν καὶ πλατυθῆσιν, οἱ προφῆται λέγουσιν, καὶ Ἰσοαίας, καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι οὐμολογοῦσιν. And Irenæus [*Vid. advers. Hær. Lib. V. cap. 33.*] not only gives into this opinion, but intimates, that it was brought into the church before his time, by one Papias, cotemporary with Polycarp, and that he received it from those who had it imparted to them by the apostle John: But Eusebius, *Vid. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. III. cap. 33.* though he speaks concerning this Papias, as one who was intimate with Polycarp, notwithstanding represents him as a very weak man; and therefore there is little credit to be given to his account of this matter, as agreeable to the apostle's sentiments or writings; and Irenæus himself, in the place before mentioned, cites a passage out of the same author, which, he pretends, he received from those that had it from the apostle John, concerning a certain time, in which there shall be vines, which shall produce ten thousand branches, and each of these as many smaller branches; and each of these smaller branches have ten thousand twigs, and every twig shall bear ten thousand clusters of grapes, and every cluster ten thousand grapes; which shews that the man was ready to swallow any fable he heard; and, if it was told him so, to fasten it upon the apostle, which discovers how little credit was to be given to what he says concerning this opinion, especially as he explains it, as transmitted to the church by the apostle John. And Tertullian is also mentioned, as giving some occasional hints, which shew that he was of this opinion. And Lactantius, who, in his Ciceronian style, describes the happy condition that the church shall be in, (without having much regard to those spiritual privileges that it shall enjoy, in which sense the predictions of the prophets, concerning it, are principally to be understood) takes his plan more especially from some things that are said concerning it, in the Sybilline oracles. *Vid. Lactant. de vita beat. Lib. VII. cap. 24. & Epitom. cap. 11.* ; *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XX. cap. 7.*

are just or no. As for those, which can hardly be called any other than romantic, and have little more to support them, than the ungrounded conjecture of those who advance them, and are so far from agreeing with the general scope and design of scripture, that they contain a reflection on the methods of Christ's government, rather than an expedient to advance it; these carry in themselves their own confutation, and nothing farther need be said in opposition to them.

Before we proceed to consider how far Christ's reign on earth may be defended, and in what other respects several things, which are asserted, relating to some circumstances, that they suppose, will attend it, do not seem to be sufficiently founded on scripture, we shall take leave to premise some things, in general, relating to the method in which this subject ought to be managed.

1. So far as the scripture plainly gives countenance to this doctrine in general, *viz.* that the administration of Christ's government in this lower world, shall be attended with great glory, and shall abundantly tend to the advantage of his church, this is a subject of too great importance to be passed over with neglect, as though we had no manner of concern therein, or it were a matter of mere speculation; for certainly all scripture is written for our learning, and ought to be studied and improved by us, to the glory of God, and our own edification. And as for those texts that speak of Christ's government, as exercised in this world, they contain matters in them not only awful and sublime, but our having just ideas thereof, will be a direction to our faith, when we pray for the further advancement of Christ's kingdom, as we are bound daily to do.

2. We must take heed that we do not give too great scope to our fancy, by framing imaginary schemes of our own, and then bringing in scripture, not without some violence offered to the sense thereof, to give countenance to them; nor ought we to acquiesce in such a sense of scripture, brought to support this doctrine, as is evidently contrary to other scriptures or to the nature and spirituality of Christ's government.

3. We must take it for granted, that some of those scriptures, which relate to this matter, are hard to be understood, and therefore a humble modesty becomes us, in treating on this subject, rather than to censure those who differ from us, as though they were departed from that faith, which is founded on the most obvious and plain sense of scripture, especially if they maintain nothing that is derogatory to the glory of Christ; which rule we shall endeavour to observe, in what remains to be considered on this subject. And since most allow that there is a sense, in which Christ's kingdom shall be attended with



greater circumstances of glory than it is at present, we shall proceed to shew,

(1.) How Christ's kingdom shall be advanced, in this lower world, beyond what it is at present, and that in such a way as agrees very well with the sense of several scriptures relating thereunto, without giving into some extremes, which many have done, who have plead for Christ's personal reign on earth, in such a way, in which it cannot easily be defended. We freely own, as what we think agreeable to scripture,

1st, That, as Christ has, in all ages, displayed his glory, as King of the Church, as has been before observed; so we have ground to conclude, from scripture, that the administration of of his government in this world, before his coming to judgment, will be attended with greater magnificence, more visible marks of glory, and various occurrences of providence, that shall tend to the welfare and happiness of his church, in a greater degree, than has hitherto been beheld, or experienced by it, since it was first planted by the apostles, after his ascension into heaven; which we think to be the sense in general, of those scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, which speak of the latter-day glory. Some of the prophets seem to look farther than the first preaching of the gospel, and the glorious display of Christ's government that attended it, which was, in part, an accomplishment of some of their predictions relating hereunto, inasmuch as there are some expressions, which they make use of, that seem as yet not to have had their accomplishment: Thus the prophet *Isaiah*, when he speaks of *the glory of the Lord as arising*, and being *seen upon the church*, and *the Gentiles coming to this light*, and *kings to the brightness thereof*. *Isa. lx. 1. & seq.* and many other things to the same purpose, which denote the glorious privileges that the gospel-church should enjoy: Though this, in a spiritual sense, may, in a great measure, be supposed to be already accomplished; yet there are other things, which he foretels concerning it, which do not yet appear to have had their accomplishment: as when he says, that *thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night*, ver. 11. And the same mode of speaking is used, concerning the New Jerusalem, in *Rev. xxi. 25.* as denoting the church's being perfectly free from all those afflictive dispensations of providence, which would tend to hinder the preaching and success of the gospel; and that *violence should be no more heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction in thy borders*, ver. 18. by which he intends the church's perfect freedom from all persecution; and that *the sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory*. Ver. 18, 19. This is so far from having been yet accomplished,

that it seems to refer to the same thing, that is mentioned concerning the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 23. and almost expressed in the same words, which, if it be not a metaphorical description of the heavenly state, has a peculiar reference to the latter-day glory; and, when the prophet farther adds, that *thy people shall be all righteous*, as denoting that holiness shall almost universally obtain in the world, as much as iniquity has abounded in it, this does not appear to have been yet accomplished.

Again, when the prophet Micah speaks of *the Mountain of the Lord, being established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills, and that people should flow unto it*, Micah iv. 1. though this, and some other things that he there mentions, may refer to the first preaching of the gospel, and success thereof; yet what he farther adds, that *they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; and nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid*, ver. 3, 4. This prophecy, so far as it may be taken otherwise than in a spiritual sense, seems to imply a greater degree of peace and tranquility than the gospel-church has hitherto enjoyed; therefore when he says, that *this shall be in the last days*, ver. 1. we have reason to conclude, that he does not mean barely the last, or gospel dispensation, which commenced on our Saviour's ascension into heaven, but the last period thereof, viz. that time which we are now considering.

As to the account we have hereof in the New Testament, especially in many places in the book of the Revelation, that speak of *the kingdoms of the world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*, and of his taking to himself his great power and reigning, Rev. xi. 15, 17. and what is spoken concerning the thousand years reign, chap. v. 20. whatever be the sense hereof, as to some circumstances of glory that shall attend this administration of the affairs of his kingdom, it certainly has not yet had its accomplishment, and therefore leads us to expect that it shall be attended with greater degrees of glory redounding to himself, which we call the latter-day glory.

2dly, Many privileges will redound to the church hereby; for as Christ is said to reign on earth, so the saints are represented as reigning with him, as they say, *Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth*, Rev. v. 10, and elsewhere, when the apostle speaks of Christ's reigning a thousand years, adds, that *they shall reign with him*, Rev. xx. 6. which cannot be taken in any other sense than for a spiritual reign, agreeable to Christ's kingdom, which is not of this world; therefore,

3dly, We have, from hence, sufficient ground to conclude, that when these prophecies shall have their accomplishment, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, which it has never yet been in all respects, so that godliness shall be as much valued and esteemed, as it has been decried, and as universally; and it shall be reckoned as great an honour to be a Christian, as it has, in the most degenerate age of the church, been matter of reproach. And to this we may add, that the church shall have a perfect freedom from persecution in all parts of the world; and a greater glory shall be put on the ordinances, and more success attend them, than has hitherto been experienced. In short there shall be, as it were, an universal spread of religion and holiness to the Lord, throughout the world.

4thly, When this glorious dispensation shall commence, we have sufficient ground to conclude, that, the Anti-christian powers having been wholly subdued, the Jews shall be converted. This may be inferred from the order in which this is foretold, in the book of the Revelation, in which the fall and utter ruin of Babylon is predicted, in chap. xviii. And, after this, we read in chap. xix. of the *marriage of the Lamb being come; and his wife, as having made herself ready; and others who are styled blessed, are called to the marriage-supper*, in ver. 7, 9. This, as an ingenious and learned writer observes\*, seems to be a prediction of the call of the Jews, and of the saints of the faithful, namely, the gospel church, who were converted before this time, being made partakers of the spiritual privileges of Christ's kingdom, together with them, and so invited to the *marriage-supper*; accordingly, by the *Lamb's wife*, is intended the converted Jews, who are considered as espoused to him; and inasmuch as *their being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish a righteousness of their own, and not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God*, Rom. x. 3. occasioned their being rejected; so, when they are converted, and these new espousals are celebrated, it is particularly observed, that this righteousness shall be their greatest glory, the robe that they shall be adorned with; so that when this bride is said to have made herself ready, it follows, in Rev. xix. 8. *To her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linnen is the righteousness of the saints*. This prophecy, being placed immediately before the account of the *thousand years' reign*, in chap. xx. gives ground to conclude, that it shall be before it, or an introduction to it.

*Object.* I am sensible there are some who question whether those prophecies, especially such as are found in the Old Tes-

\* *Vid Mede Commet. min. in Apocal. cap. xix. and Dr. More, and others, who are of the same opinion as to this matter.*



tament, that foretell the conversion of the Jews, had not their full accomplishment in the beginning of the gospel-state, when many churches were gathered out of the Jews, and some of the apostles were sent to exercise their ministry in those parts of the world, where the greatest number of them resided, upon which account Peter is called the apostle of the Jews; for *God wrought effectually in him to the apostleship of the circumcision*, Gal. ii. 8. and he, together with James and John, direct their inspired epistles to them in particular.

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* But to this it may be replied, that there are some scriptures, in the New Testament, relating to this matter, which do not seem, as yet, to have been accomplished, but respect this glorious dispensation, in which there shall be, as it were, an universal conversion of them in the latter day; particularly what the apostle says, *If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* Rom. xi. 15. And he adds, *I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in, and then all Israel shall be saved*, ver. 25, 26. This seems, as yet, not to have been accomplished; and as for those scriptures, in the Old Testament, that predict many things in favour of the Jewish nation; though I will not deny that many of them had their accomplishment, either in their return from the Babylonish captivity, or in those that were converted in the beginning of the gospel-dispensation, yet I cannot think that they all had; for the prophet Hosea seems to foretell some things that are yet to come, when he speaks of them, as being *many days without a king, without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim*, Hos. iii. 4. which seems to point at the condition in which they now are; and he adds, in the following words, *Afterwards the children of Israel shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king*, to wit, Christ, *and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days*; which seems to intend their conversion, which is yet expected.

Thus far our faith, as to this matter, may be said to be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets: but, if we pretend to determine the way, and manner in which this shall be done, we must have recourse to uncertain conjectures, instead of solid arguments. That learned writer whom I have before mentioned,\* gives his opinion about it, which I will not pretend to disprove, though, indeed the ingenuity thereof is more to be valued than its convincing evidence. He supposes it shall be somewhat like the conversion of the apostle Paul, by Christ's appearing with a glorious light on earth, and then retiring to

\* See Mede's Works, Book IV. Epist. 17. Page 938—940.

heaven again: but the accommodating one particular circumstance of providence, (in which Christ seems to have another end to answer, namely, that Paul might be qualified for the apostleship by this extraordinary sight of him) to this matter, as an argument of the Jews being converted in such a manner, proves nothing at all; therefore the best way is to leave this among the secrets which belong not to us to enquire after.\* Thus concerning the conversion of the Jews, as what is expected to go immediately before those glorious times that we are speaking of. And to this we may add,

5thly, That there shall be a greater spread of the gospel through the dark parts of the earth; and so that scripture, which was but now referred to, concerning the *Gentiles coming to the light* of this glorious morning, or *the forces of the Gentiles coming* unto the church, Isa. lx. 3, 5. shall have a fuller accomplishment than hitherto it has had; as also another scripture in which the prophet says, that *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea*, ch. xi. 9. We will not deny but that this had, in part, an accomplishment, when the gospel was first preached by the apostles; and, indeed, the prophet intimates, that these things shall come to pass when *a rod shall come out of the stem of Jesse*, ver. 1. that is, after Christ's incarnation, who was of the seed of David, according to the flesh. Therefore I cannot but think that those words, *In that day*, which we often meet with in scripture, ver. 10, 11. signify the whole gospel-dispensation, from the beginning thereof to its consummation, in Christ's coming

\* As for the story that Mede relates, to give countenance to this opinion, concerning Christ's appearing, in a glorious manner, upon the Jews demanding such an extraordinary event, (after a public disputation, held three days, between Gregentius, an Arabian Bishop, and Herbanus, a Jew, a multitude of spectators being present, both Jews and Christians) and signifying that he was the same Person that their fathers had crucified; and their being first struck blind, as Paul was, and then, like him, converted and baptized, there are several things, in this account, that seem fabulous and incredible; though it is not improbable that there was a disputation held between Gregentius and the Jews, about the truth of the Christian religion, about the year of our Lord 479; or, as others suppose, 570: yet it is much to be questioned, whether the account we have of it be not spurious, written, by one who calls himself by that name, in Greek, about three or four hundred years since; and especially, because so extraordinary a miracle, wrought in an eye when miracles had, for so considerable a time, ceased, is not taken notice of by other writers, of more reputation in the age in which it is said to be wrought, especially since it would have been one of the most extraordinary proofs of the Christian religion that have been given since our Saviour's time. And it is very strange, that, as the result hereof, five millions and a half of the Jews should be converted at once, by this miracle, and yet this thing be passed over in silence by other writers; and it is very much to be questioned, whether there were such a multitude of Jews gathered together in one kingdom, and, indeed, whether that kingdom consisted of such a number of people; and, if there were so many Jews, we must suppose that there was an equal number of Christians present; but that so many should be present at one disputation, seems incredible to a very great degree. Vid. *Gregen disputat. cum Herben. fol. 192, & 200* & *Curs. Hist. lit. T. vi. l. page 267*.

to judgment; and then we may look for some things, which the prophet here foretells, as what should come to pass in one part thereof, and other things in another. And as to what respects the knowledge of Christ being so extensive, as that it is said to *cover the earth*; or Christ's being elsewhere said to be a *light to the Gentiles*, though it denote the first success of the gospel in the conversion of the Gentiles, it does not argue, that such-like texts shall not have a farther accomplishment when those other things shall come to pass, which the prophet mentions in the foregoing verses, under the metaphor of the *wolf dwelling with the lamb*, &c. and other things, which relate to a more peaceable state of the church, than it has hitherto experienced. And it seems sufficiently evident, that, when this happy time shall come, the interest of Christ shall be the prevailing interest in the world, and the glory of his kingdom shall be more eminently displayed, than, at present, it is. In these respects, we are far from denying the reign of Christ in this lower world, for we think it plainly contained in scripture; nevertheless,

(2.) There are several things in their scheme, which we do not think sufficiently founded in scripture. As,

*First*, We cannot see sufficient reason to conclude that Christ shall appear visibly, or, as they call it, *personally*, in his human nature, on earth, when he is said eminently to reign therein. If they intended nothing else by Christ's appearing visibly, or personally, but his farther evincing his Mediatorial glory, in the effects of his power and grace, which his church shall experience, as it does now, though in a less degree; or if they should say, that some greater circumstances of glory will then attend it, this would not be, in the least, denied: but more than this we cannot allow of, for the following reasons:

1st, Because the presence of Christ's human nature, here on earth, would not contribute so much to the church's spiritual edification and happiness, as his presence, by the powerful influence of his Holy Spirit, would do. This is sufficiently evident; for when he dwelt on earth, immediately after his incarnation, his ministry was not attended with that success that might have been expected; which gave him occasion to complain, as the prophet represents him speaking to this purpose, *I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, Israel is not gathered*; and, upon this, he is, as it were, comforted with the thought, that, notwithstanding, he should be *glorious in the eyes of the Lord*, that is, accepted of, and afterwards glorified by him, and that he *should be given for a light to the Gentiles*, Isa. xlix. 4—6. that is, that the gospel should be preached to all nations, and that then greater success should attend it. Now this is owing to Christ's presence by his Spi-



rit; therefore, if that be poured forth in a more plentiful degree on his church it will contribute more to the increase of its graces, and spiritual comforts, than his presence, in his human nature, could do without it; and therefore it cannot be argued, that Christ's presence, in such a way, is absolutely necessary to the flourishing state of the church, to that degree, in which it is expected in the latter day. It is true, the presence of his human nature here on earth was absolutely necessary, for the impetration of redemption, or purchasing his people to himself by his death; but his presence in heaven, appearing as an Advocate for them, and, as the result thereof, sending down his Spirit, to work all grace in their souls, is, in its kind, also necessary. This our Saviour intimates to his disciples, immediately before his ascension into heaven, when he says, *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come*, John xvi. 7. and, if there be some peculiar advantages redounding to the church, from Christ's continuance in heaven, as well as his ascending up into it, it is not reasonable to suppose that the church's happiness, as to their spiritual concerns, should arise so much from his coming from thence into this lower world, as it does from those continued powerful influences of the Holy Spirit, which are said to depend upon, and be the consequence of his sitting at the right hand of God in heaven.

2dly, If he should appear on earth in his human nature, he must either divest himself of that celestial glory, which he is clothed with therein, agreeable to the heavenly state; or else his people, with whom he is supposed to reign, must have such a change made in their nature, that their bodies must be rendered celestial, and their souls enlarged in proportion to the heavenly state, otherwise they would not be fit to converse with him, in an immediate way, by reason of the present frailty of their nature. Of this we have various instances in scripture: thus when Moses saw God's *back-parts*, that is, some extraordinary emblematical display of his glory, God tells him, *Thou canst not see my face; for no man can see me and live*; and it follows, that while this glory passed by him, *God put him in a cleft of the rock, and covered him with his hand*, Exod. xxxiii. 20—23. and assigns this as a reason, because his face should not be seen. He could not, because of the imperfection of this present state, behold the extraordinary emblematical displays of the divine glory, without the frame of nature's being broken thereby; on which occasion Augustine says, understanding the words in this sense, Lord, let me die, that I may see thee.\*

Moreover, when Christ appeared to the apostle Paul, at his first conversion in the glory of his human nature, *he fell to the*

*earth, trembling and astonished*, Acts ix. 6. as not being able to converse with him; and afterwards, when the same apostle was caught up into the *third heaven*, and had a view of the glory thereof, this was greater than his frail nature could bear, and therefore he says, that *whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell*, 2 Cor. xii. 2. And John, the beloved disciple, who conversed familiarly with him, when in his humbled state, and *leaned on his breast at supper*, John xxi. 20. when he appeared to him, after his ascension, in a glorious emblematical way, says, *When I saw him, I fell at his feet, as dead*, Rev. i. 17. compared with the foregoing verses, and the apostle Paul says, *Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more*, 2 Cor. v. 16. that is, whilst we are in this world, inasmuch as we are incapable of conversing with him in his glorified human nature. This is also agreeable to what the apostle says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. xv. 50. that is, man, in this present state, cannot enjoy those privileges which are reserved for him in heaven, which include in them a conversing with Christ, in his human nature, as well as with others, that are inhabitants of heaven.

3dly, If we suppose that Christ will reign personally on earth, it must be farther enquired; whether they that reign with him, during this period of time, shall die, or no? If not, that seems contrary to the fixed laws of nature, and this present state, as mortal, being opposed to a state of immortality and eternal life; but if they shall die, then they must necessarily lose one great advantage, which they now enjoy, in dying, namely, *being with Christ*, Phil. i. 23. for when they die, in some respect, they must be said to depart from Christ, and, whatever advantage the presence of the human nature of Christ is of to the inhabitants of heaven, that they must be supposed to be deprived of, whilst he is reigning on earth. These, and other things to the same purpose, are consequences of Christ's personal reign, in his human nature, on earth; for which reason we cannot acquiesce in their opinion, who maintain it.

Secondly, There is another thing, that we cannot approve of, in the fore-mentioned scheme, relating to Christ's thousand years' reign on earth, when they assert several things concerning the conversion of the Jews, which seem contrary to the analogy of faith. We have before taken it for granted that the Jews shall be converted, when this glorious reign begins, or immediately before it: but there are several things they add to this, which, we think, they have no ground, from scripture, to do; we shall mention two.

(1.) That after the Jews are converted, they shall continue a distinct body of people, governed by their own laws, as they

were before Christ's incarnation. But we rather conclude, that they shall be joined to, and become one body with the Christian church, all marks of distinction being laid aside, and shall be *grafted into the same olive-tree*, Rom. xi. 24. that is, into Christ; and certainly the middle wall of partition, which was taken away by Christ, shall never be set up again. This seems to be intended by our Saviour's words, *There shall be one fold, and one shepherd*, John x. 16.

(2.) Besides this, there are several other things, which they assert, concerning the Jews rebuilding the temple, at Jerusalem, and that being the principal seat of Christ's reign, where the saints shall reside and reign with him. As for the temple, that was only designed as a place of worship, during the dispensation before Christ's incarnation, and was, in some respects, a type of his dwelling among us in our nature; and as for the temple service, as it is now abolished, it shall continue to be so, till the end of the world; and then, what occasion is there for a temple to be built?

And as for Jerusalem's being rebuilt, or the land of Judea's being the principal seat of Christ's kingdom on earth, we humbly conceive it to be an ungrounded supposition, or a mistake of the sense of some scriptures in the Old Testament, which were literally fulfilled in the building of Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, and have no reference to any thing now to come. And as for the land of Canaan, though it had a glory put on it some ages before our Saviour's incarnation, as being the scene of many wonderful dispensations of providence, in favour of that people, while they remained distinct from all other nations in the world; yet we cannot conclude that it shall be a distinct place of residence for them, when, being converted, they are joined to the Christian church: and therefore the land of Canaan will be no more accounted of, than any other part of the world; and, considering also the smallness of the place, we cannot think it sufficient to contain the great number of those, who, together with the Jews, shall be the happy subjects of Christ's kingdom.

*Thirdly*, There is another thing, in which we cannot agree with some who treat of Christ's reign on earth, namely, when they suppose that the saints, who are to reign with him, are to be in a sinless state, little short of the heavenly. It is true, herein they are much divided in their sentiments: but some assert, that they shall be free from all the remainders of corruption; and, indeed, their argument leads them to it, if we consider the saints as being raised from the dead, and their souls brought back from heaven, into which, when they first entered, they were perfectly freed from sin. From hence it will necessarily follow, that there will be no room for the more



tification of sin, striving against it, or resisting those temptations, which we are now liable to from it: this we cannot conclude to be a privilege that any have ground to expect, while in this world; and, indeed, those graces, whereby we subdue our corruptions, or strive against temptations, are peculiarly adapted to this present state in opposition to the heavenly.

Moreover, when they say, as some do, that this reign shall be such, as that the saints shall be free from all manner of trouble, internal or external, personal or relative, at least, so long as Satan is bound, that is, to the end of these thousand years; this seems to be more than what Christ has given his people ground to expect, who tells them, that, *in the world, ye shall have*, at least some degree of *tribulation*, John xvi. 33. and that they must wait for a perfect freedom from it till they come to heaven.

*Fourthly*, We cannot think, as some do, (as has been before observed, that, during this thousand years' reign, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments, shall cease, and all other laws and ordinances, which Christ has ordained for the gathering and building up of particular churches, for the bringing in his elect, for the propagating his name and interest in the world by these methods, shall all be discontinued, as there will be no occasion for them. This is what we think altogether ungrounded; for we cannot but suppose, that as soon as the whole number of the election of grace are brought in, and thereby the end and design of the preaching the gospel is answered; or when Christ can say, *Here am I*, and all that thou hast given me, he will present them to the Father, and so receive his militant church into a triumphant state in heaven. And, indeed, it seems a very weak foundation, on which this part of their scheme depends, when they say, that those texts which speak of Christ's *being with his ministers to the end of the world*, Matt. xxviii. 20. and elsewhere, that, in the Lord's supper, his death is to be commemorated *till he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. relate to the coming of Christ in the Millennium, which seems a very much strained and forced sense thereof. And as for that other scripture, wherein it is said, that *the New Jerusalem had no temple, and that it had no need of the sun, nor the moon, for the glory of the Lord did lighten it, and the Lamb was the light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23. this must not be brought to prove that the ordinances of divine worship, shall cease during this thousand years' reign, unless they can first make it appear that the New Jerusalem has reference thereunto; whereas some think that the Holy Ghost is here describing the heavenly state, which agrees very well with its connexion with what is mentioned in the foregoing chapter; and if this be the sense thereof, the glory which the church shall then arrive to,

is such as shall be after the final judgment, and consequently it is a description of the glorious state of Christ's kingdom in heaven, rather than here on earth.

Thus having considered what we think to be the general design of those scriptures, which speak of Christ's reigning in or over the earth, and of the happy state of the church at that time; and, on the other hand, endeavoured to prove, that several additional circumstances, which, some suppose, will attend it, are not sufficiently founded on scripture, and, in some respects, seem inconsistent with the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and, with the ground we have to expect, that the present mode of administration, and the laws and ordinances thereof, shall continue as long as the world endures: we shall now consider the sense they give of some scriptures, on which the main stress of their argument depends, together with the inconclusiveness of their way of reasoning from them, and also in what sense we apprehend those scriptures are to be understood.

1. As to what concerns the *first resurrection*, which they found on that scripture in Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath a part in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years*: a learned and judicious writer \* supposes, that the first resurrection shall be only of the martyrs, and that it is to be taken in a literal sense, and that this shall open the scene of Christ's thousand years' reign, and that the second resurrection shall be at the close thereof, in which the whole world shall be raised from the dead, and then follows the final judgment: but he differs from many of the ancient and modern Chiliasts, in that he says, he dares not so much as imagine that Christ shall visibly converse with men on earth; for his kingdom ever hath been, and shall be, a kingdom, which is of such a nature, that his throne and kingly residence is in heaven; and though the deceased martyrs shall re-assume their bodies, and reign, yet it shall be in heaven; whereas the saints, who shall be then living, and have not worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark, these shall reign on earth; for he supposes, that scripture, that relates to this matter, to contain a vision, of two distinct things, namely, one respecting those that *were beheaded for the witness of Jesus*, and these lived and reigned with Christ, but not on earth; the other respecting those, who, though they had not suffered, had *not worshipped the beast nor his image*. These also reigned during this thousand years, not in heaven, but on earth. These are considered, as in their way to heaven; the other, as received into the heavenly country, as

\* *Vid. Mede de Resurrec prim. Lib. III. Page 719, 749, 750.*

a peculiar prerogative conferred upon them, as the reward of their martyrdom; and this first resurrection he supposes to be against no article of faith, but may be as well defended, in the literal sense thereof, as the resurrection we read of in Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. in which it is said, that *the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose, and came out of their graves, after Christ's resurrection*; and, with a becoming modesty, he cites Augustin's words to this purpose,\* that if nothing more were intended hereby, but that the delights of this kingdom were spiritual, the opinion would be tolerable, and that that father was once of that judgment. Thus he says as much as can be said in defence of this opinion; and nothing is wanting to support his argument, but sufficient evidence, that the text must necessarily be taken in a literal sense.

But when others proceed much farther, and conclude that Christ shall appear visibly on earth, and that the design of the first resurrection is, that they, who shall be raised from the dead, should live here on earth; this we see far less reason to conclude to be the sense of those words, and accordingly shall take leave to consider what may be said in opposition to it.

Therefore, if they shall be raised, their bodies must either be corruptible and mortal, or incorruptible and immortal; to suppose that they shall be raised corruptible and mortal, and consequently liable to the other infirmities of life, is to suppose their resurrection to be of the same kind with that of Lazarus, and others that were raised by our Saviour: but this is so disagreeable to the character of saints, raised from the dead to reign with Christ, that it is not generally asserted by those who treat on this subject. Therefore they must be raised incorruptible and immortal; and, if so, it will follow from hence, that this world will not be a place fit for their abode; for they shall be raised with celestial bodies, and so fitted to inhabit the heavenly mansions; neither will those accommodations, which this earth affords, the food it produces, or those other conveniences which we enjoy therein, by the blessing of providence, be agreeable to persons who are raised up in a state of perfection, as they must be supposed to be, or, as the apostle styles it, *raised in glory*. And, since they are appointed to live and converse with men in this lower world, I cannot see how there can be any conversation between them and others, who continue to live in this world, not, like them raised from the dead, but retaining their present mortal frame. If *their vile bodies*, as the apostle speaks concerning the bodies of the saints, when raised from the dead, *shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body*, Phil. iii. 12. how can weak frail creatures intimately converse with them? And if it be said, that they shall not be rais-

\* Vid. Aug. de civ. Dei, Lib. xx. cap. 7.



ed with such a glory, but that this shall be deferred till they are translated to heaven, as was true with respect to our Saviour's human nature, after his resurrection; though this be possible, yet it seems not agreeable to the account we have of the circumstances of glory, with which the saints shall be raised from the dead.

But that which seems to make this opinion more improbable, is, that it is inconsistent with that state of blessedness, into which they have been once admitted, namely, in their souls, wherein they have been in the immediate vision and fruition of God; as travellers arrived to their journey's end, and wanting nothing to complete their blessedness but their resurrection; and, now they are supposed to be raised from the dead; yet their blessedness is diminished, by their being appointed to live in this lower world, and, as we may say to leave that better country, in which they have been, to re-assume the character and condition of pilgrims and sojourners upon earth.

To this it will be objected, that we may as reasonably suppose, that these saints shall be raised in circumstances, fit to converse with the rest of the world, as any that have been raised from the dead have formerly been. I cannot deny but that this is possible; but yet it does not seem probable, inasmuch as they shall not be raised from the dead for the same end and design that others have been, that the power of God might be illustrated, or some contested truth confirmed by this miracle; but that some special honour, or privilege, might be conferred on them, as the reward of their former sufferings: but this is disagreeable to their being raised in such a state, as that their happiness is thereby diminished.

Moreover, what valuable end is answered by this their change of condition, which might in some measure tend to justify the assertion? Must they live here, that they might perform an extraordinary ministry, to promote the edification of their mortal brethren, whom they found living upon earth? This was not absolutely necessary, for God has appointed other ways for the edification of his church; and, if he did not think fit, before, to send down ministers, to preach the gospel, from heaven, to them, but ordained the common method of preaching it by others, less qualified for this work, who are subject to like infirmities with those to whom they preach, why should we suppose such an alteration in the method of divine providence on this particular occasion?

And if we suppose that they shall continue on earth till Christ's appearing to judgment, then it must be argued, that they were sent here not only to be helpers of the faith of others, who live therein, but to be exposed, in common with them, to a second warfare upon earth; not, indeed, with flesh and blood,

but with those who are represented in the same chapter, in which the first resurrection, and thousand years' reign, are mentioned, as *compassing the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city*; and therefore they are called back from a triumphant to a militant state.

If it be said, that they shall be admitted into heaven before this battle begins, that can hardly be supposed; for if God send them to be companions with his mortal saints, in their prosperous state, will he call them away when the time of their greatest danger approaches, in which their presence might be of the greatest service to their brethren, who are left to struggle with these difficulties? Therefore, upon the whole, we cannot suppose that any shall, in a literal sense, be raised from the dead, till this glorious, though spiritual reign of Christ shall be at an end, and the day of judgment draws nigh, which is agreeable to the general scope of all those scriptures, which speak of the resurrection and final judgment.

*Object.* But to this it will be objected, that the scripture elsewhere intimates, that there shall be two resurrections; for the apostle says, in 1 Thes. iv. 16. that *the dead in Christ shall rise first*; therefore why may not this resurrection be understood in the same sense with that mentioned in Rev. xx. which has been before considered?

*Ans.* We do not deny but that this resurrection, which the apostle speaks of, must be taken in a literal sense; but let it be observed, that he does not here mention any thing of the thousand years' reign, but of the day of judgment, when *Christ shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the arch-angel*, with which the glory of that day shall begin, and then the dead shall be raised, in which the saints and faithful shall have the pre-eminence; they shall rise first, that is, before others, mentioned in the following verse, *that are alive, who shall be caught up with them in the clouds*. And this shall also be done, before the wicked shall be raised, to the end that, when Christ appears, *they*, as it is said elsewhere, *may appear with him in glory*; and that they may bear a part in the solemnity of that day, and be happy in his presence; when others are raised to shame and everlasting contempt, and filled with the utmost confusion and distress.

Moreover, this first resurrection of those that died in Christ, is not particularly applied to them that suffered martyrdom for him, much less is there any account of its being a thousand years before the general resurrection; therefore it may very well be understood of a resurrection a very short time before it, and consequently gives no countenance to the opinion, which has been before considered, concerning this resurrection, as going before the reign of Christ on earth.

2. There is another scripture brought in defence of another part of their scheme, taken from the apostle's words, in Rom. viii. 21—23. where he speaks of the *creatures'* present *bondage*, and future deliverance, and their *waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies*, which, they suppose, will have its accomplishment, when this reign of Christ begins: but I cannot think that the apostle, in that scripture, intends any thing else, but that the whole creation is liable at present, to the curse, consequent upon man's fall; and that the deliverance he speaks of, shall be at the general resurrection, when the saints shall be raised immortal and incorruptible, which is what they now wait and hope for.

Thus we have considered the sense that is given of some scriptures, by those who understand the reign of Christ on earth, as attended with various circumstances, which we cannot readily allow of; and shewed, that some of those texts, which are usually brought to support that particular scheme, have reference to the return of the Jews from captivity,\* and others, that predict their building of Jerusalem, and the temple there, Jer. xxix. 5. Isa. xlv. 28. and the setting up their civil and religious policy, had their accomplishment after their return from the Babylonish captivity; and that those, which seem to look farther, and respect some privileges which they shall enjoy in the last days, will be fulfilled, when they are converted to Christianity, and partakers of many spiritual privileges, in common with the gospel-church; therefore I need only mention two scriptures more, which we understand in a sense very different from what some do, who treat of Christ's reign on earth. As,

1st, That in which we have an account of the general conflagration, which, as was before observed, some few, who give too great scope to their wit and fancy, beyond all the bounds of modesty, and without considering those absurdities that will follow from it, have maintained that it shall be immediately before Christ's reign on earth begins: the scripture they bring for that purpose, is that in 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13. in which the apostle says, that *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* This scripture, it must be confessed, is hard to be understood. We are far from thinking, as some do, that it is only a metaphorical description of some remarkable providences, tending to the ruin of Christ's enemies, and the advantage of his people; certainly the words are to be taken in a literal sense; for the apostle had been

\* See Ezek. xxxvii. 21. and Jer. xxxvii. 7—13. & *alibi* *passim*.



speaking, in the foregoing verses, of the *old world*, which, *being overflowed with water, perished*; which is, without doubt, to be taken in a literal sense. And now he speaks, as some call it, of a second deluge, which shall be not by water, but by fire,\* *in which the heavens and the earth shall pass away*, or be *dissolved*, that is, changed, as to the form thereof, though not annihilated. By *the heavens and the earth*, the learned Mede well understands that part of the frame of nature, that was subjected to the curse, or that is inhabited by Christ's enemies, and includes in it the earth, water, and air, but not the heavenly bodies, which are not only at a vast distance from it, but it is little more than a point, if compared to them for magnitude. And he also (notwithstanding some peculiarities held by him, as before mentioned, relating to the Millennium) justly observes, that this conflagration shall not be till the end of the world, and consequently it shall be immediately before the day of judgment; and, indeed, the apostle intimates as much, when he speaks of this awful providence, as *reserved to the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men*, in ver. 7. The main difficulty to be accounted for, is, what is meant by these *new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness*, which are appointed as an habitation for the righteous. Concerning which, if I may be allowed to give my sense thereof, with that humility and modesty that the difficulty of the subject calls for, I cannot think that there is any absurdity, if we suppose, that, by these *new heavens and new earth*, the apostle means, that the form of them shall be so changed, as that they shall be an apartment of heaven, in which, together with those other parts of the frame of nature, which are designed to be the seat of the blessed, the saints shall dwell and reign with Christ for ever.

2dly, We shall now consider the sense that may be given of that scripture, in Rev. xx. and more especially what we read therein, concerning the *first resurrection*, in which the martyrs are said *to live*, when this thousand years' reign begins, and the *rest of the dead not to live, till these thousand years be finished*, in ver. 4, 5. on which the stress of the whole controversy principally depends. I cannot but adhere to their opinion, who think that these words are to be taken in a metaphorical sense; and then they, who were *beheaded for the witness of Jesus*, viz. the martyrs, shall live when Christ's spiritual reign begins, that is, the cause, for which they suffered martyrdom, shall be revived: this is supposed to have been in a languishing and dying condition, during the reign of Anti-christ, and towards the close thereof, to be at the lowest ebb, and, as it were, dead; I

\* So Irenæus styles it, *Adv. Her. Lib. V. cap. 29. Diluvium superveniet ignis.*

say, this shall be revived, these martyrs shall, as it were, live again, not in their own persons, but in their successors, who espouse the same cause. Before this, the enemies of Christ, and his gospel, persecuted and trampled on his cause, insulted the memory of those that had suffered for it; but afterwards, when it is said, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, then Christ's cause revives, and that which was victorious over it dies, and shall not rise again, or be in any capacity to give disturbance to the church, till the thousand years are finished, and Satan is loosed again out of prison, to give life and spirit to it; and then we read of a new war begun, a fresh battle fought, *the nations deceived, the camp of the saints compassed about*; and this will continue till Christ shall come, and put an end to it at the day of judgment, when the devil shall be *cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*. In this sense some, not without ground, understand the account which is given of the *slaying* and *rising* of the *witnesses*, Rev. xi. 7, 11. as signifying that the gospel, which before had been persecuted, and the preaching thereof prohibited, shall then prevail without restraint. The *witnesses'* *death*, denotes their being silenced; their *rising* and *standing upon their feet*, their having liberty again to preach. And therefore why may we not understand the resurrection, in the chapter we are now considering, as taken in the same sense? And this agrees very well with the sense of ver. 6. in which it is said, concerning them, who *have a part in the first resurrection*, that is, the saints, who live and reign with Christ, *on such this second death hath no power*, that is, whatever the enemies of the church may attempt against them, after this thousand years reign, shall be to no purpose; for they shall not prevail, their cause shall never die again. Or, if it be applied to their persons, the meaning is, that they shall not die eternally. Eternal death is a punishment to be inflicted on their enemies, who shall be *cast into the lake of fire*, which is expressly called the *second death*, in ver. 14. But these, as it is said, in Rev. ii. 11. shall not be *hurt of it*, i. e. not exposed to it; but, as they have lived with Christ, in a spiritual sense, on earth, so they shall live with him for ever in heaven.

We are, in giving this sense of the text, under a kind of necessity to recede from the literal sense thereof, because we cannot altogether reconcile that to the analogy of faith. And it will not seem strange to any, who consider the mystical or allegorical style in which this book of the Revelation is written, that this text should be understood in the same sense: However, that this sense may be farther justified, let it be considered, that it is not disagreeable to what we find in many other scriptures, that speak of the church's deliverance from its troubles, under the metaphor of a *resurrection*; and of the

destruction of its enemies, under the metaphor of *death*. Thus the Babylonish captivity, and Israel's deliverance from it, is described, in Ezek. xxxvii. 1—12. The former by a metaphor taken from a *valley full of dry bones*; the latter by another taken from their being *raised out of their graves, living and standing on their feet an exceeding great army*. And, in Ezra ix. 9. we read of God's extending mercy to them, who were before bond-men, and not forsaking them in their bondage, giving them an opportunity to set up the temple and worship of God; this is called, *giving them a reviving*; and the prophet, speaking concerning the captivity, in Lam. iii. 6. says, *He has set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old*; and the prophet Isaiah speaks concerning their return from captivity, as a resurrection from the dead, *Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise; awake, and sing ye that dwell in the dust*, Isa. xxvi. 19.

Many other scriptures might be cited, out of the writings of the prophets, to justify this metaphorical sense of the words, *death*, and *resurrection* and also some out of the New Testament, of which I need only refer to one, which has a particular respect to the subject under our present consideration, when the apostle says, that the *receiving of them*, to wit, of the church of the Jews, when converted, shall be as *life from the dead*, Rom. xi. 15. therefore the scripture gives countenance to its being called a *resurrection*.

On the other hand, we might refer to some scriptures that speak of the ruin of the church's enemies, under the metaphor of a state of death: thus, in Isa. xxvi. 14. *They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish*; and, in chap. xiv. he describes the utter destruction of the Chaldeans, the church's enemies, by whom they had been carried captive, in a very beautiful manner, and carries on the metaphor, taken from persons departed out of this world, in. ver. 9, 10, 11. and says, in particular, concerning the king of Babylon, *Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the noise of thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee*; which signifies the political death of that empire, and the utter inability which followed upon this, of their giving disturbance to the church of God, as they had formerly done. These, and many other scriptures of the like nature, may, in some measure, justify the sense we have given of the scripture before mentioned, relating to the death and resurrection of Christ's cause, for which his martyrs suffered, and the death of the Anti-christian cause, which ensued thereupon.

Thus concerning Christ's reign on earth, and what may be probably supposed to be the sense of those scriptures that are brought in defence thereof. We have not entered into the par-



ticular consideration of what is said concerning the time, or the number of years, which this glorious dispensation shall continue. We read, indeed, of Christ's *reigning a thousand years*, by which we are not to understand the eternal exercise of his government; for it is said not only to be *on earth*, but this period is also considered, as what shall have an end: which that excellent Father, whom I before mentioned, did not duly consider, when he reckoned this as a probable sense of this thousand years, and produces that scripture to justify his sense of the words, in which it is said, that *God has remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations*, Psal. cv. 8. by which we are to understand, that God will establish his covenant with his people, and make good the promises thereof throughout all the ages of eternity. This, indeed, sufficiently proves that a thousand years might be taken for eternity, agreeably to the sense of scripture; but it is plain, from the context, that it is not to be so taken here, in Rev. xx.

As for the other sense he gives of this *thousand years*,\* namely, that they might be understood as containing a great but indeterminate number of years, in the latter part of the last thousand which the world shall continue, so that, by a figurative way of speaking, a part of a thousand years may be called a thousand years; † this I will not pretend to argue against, nor to say that those divines are in the wrong, who suppose that a thousand years is put for a great number of years, and that it does not belong to us to say how many; I say, whether we are to acquiesce in this, or in the literal sense of the words, I will not determine; only we must conclude, as we have scripture ground for it, that they shall end a little before Christ's coming to judgment; during which short interval it is said, *Satan will be loosed a little season*, and make some fresh efforts against the church, till he, and those that are spirited and excited by him, to give disturbance to it, perish in the attempt, and are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. This is all that I shall say concerning the time appointed for this glorious reign, our principal design being to speak concerning the advantages that the church shall enjoy under it.

We have endeavoured to avoid two extremes, namely, that of those who do not put a just difference between it and the

\* *Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei. Lib. XX. cap. 7.*

† This is very agreeable to the scripture-mode of speaking; nothing is more common than for the cardinal number to be put for the ordinal; and so the meaning is, that this reign shall continue to the thousandth year, or till the last 1000 years of the world shall have an end, what part soever of his 1000 years it began in. Thus God tells Abraham, in Gen. xv. 13. that his seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, to wit, Egypt, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them 400 years; whereas it is certain that his seed were not above 215 years in Egypt, and they were not slaves, or afflicted there 100 years; therefore the meaning is, q. d. that they shall afflict them till 400 years are expired, from this time.

heavenly state; as also another extreme, which we have not yet mentioned, which several modern writers have given into, who suppose, that this thousand years' reign is long since past, and that the binding of Satan therein consisted only in some degrees of restraint laid on him, and that the reign itself contained in it only some advantages, comparatively small, that the church enjoyed at that time, and that the thousand years' reign began in Constantine's time, when the empire became Christian, about the year of our Lord 300, and that they ended about the year 1300, when the church met with some new difficulties from the eastern parts of the world, which they suppose to be intended by Gog and Magog.\* But we cannot see sufficient reason to adhere to this opinion, because the state of the church, when Satan is said to be bound a thousand years, is represented as attended with a greater degree of spiritual glory, holiness, purity of doctrine, and many other blessings attending the preaching the gospel, than we are given to understand by any history that it has yet enjoyed.

As to what concerns the general method, in which we have insisted on this subject, I hope we have not maintained any thing that is derogatory to the glory of Christ's kingdom, nor what has a tendency to detract from the real advantage of the saints. Do they, on the other side of the question, speak of his reigning? so do we. They, indeed, consider him as reigning in his human nature, and conversing therein with his saints; which opinion we cannot give into, for reasons before mentioned: but it is not inconsistent with the glory of Christ to assert, as we have done, that he shall reign spiritually; and the consequence hereof shall be, not the external pomp and grandeur of his subjects, but their being adorned with purity and universal holiness, and enjoying as much peace, as they have reason to expect in any condition short of heaven. Moreover, we have not advanced any thing that has a tendency to detract from the spiritual blessings and advantages of Christ's kingdom, which the saints shall enjoy in this happy period of time. If, notwithstanding all this, it be said, that there are some advantages which the contrary scheme of doctrine supposes that the saints shall enjoy on earth, beyond what we think they have ground to expect from scripture; nevertheless, their not enjoying them here will be fully compensated with a greater degree of glory, which they shall have when they reign with Christ in heaven; which leads us to consider,

The eternity of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; concerning which it is said, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end*, Luke i. 33. As he is described, by the apostle, as a *Priest for ever*, Heb. v. 6. and

\* See Napier on the Revelation, prop. 33, 34. page 61, 62.

as ever living to make intercession for those that come unto God by him, chap. vii. 25. so he shall exercise his kingly office for ever; not according to the present method of the administration thereof, but in a way adapted to that glorified state, in which his subjects shall be, in another world.

There is, indeed, a scripture that seems to assert the contrary, which the Socinians give a very perverse sense of, as though it were inconsistent with his proper deity; and accordingly they suppose, that, as he was constituted a divine Person, or had the honour of a God, or king, conferred on him, when he ascended into heaven, as the reward of the faithful discharge of his ministry on earth; so this was designed to continue no longer than to the end of the world, when he is to be set on a level with other inhabitants of heaven, and *be subject to the Father*, when *God shall be all in all*. This they suppose to be the meaning of the Apostle's words, in 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 28. *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet; and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all*. It must be acknowledged, that this is one of those things, in Paul's epistles, that are hard to be understood; but I humbly conceive that we may give a sense of it, very remote from that but now mentioned, which is subversive of his Godhead, and of the eternity of his kingdom. Therefore, for the understanding thereof, let it be considered,

(1.) That when the apostle speaks of the *end coming when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father*; by the kingdom we may, without the least strain on the sense of the text, understand his material kingdom, or the subjects of his kingdom, which is very agreeable to that sense of the word, both in scripture and in common modes of speaking; as when we call the inhabitants of a city, the city; so we call the subjects of a kingdom, the kingdom: taking the words in this sense, we must suppose, that the subjects of Christ's kingdom are his trust and charge, and that he is to deliver them up to the Father at last, as persons whom he has governed in such a way, as that the great ends of his exercising his kingly office, have been fully answered, as to what concerns his government in this lower world. This is no improbable sense of Christ's delivering up the kingdom to the Father.

But it may also be taken in another sense, to wit, for the form of Christ's kingdom, or the present mode of government, exercised towards those who are in an imperfect state: this shall be delivered up, that is, he shall cease to govern his peo-



ple in such a way as he now does ; but it doth not follow, from hence, that he shall not continue to govern them, in a way adapted to the heavenly state.

And when it is said, that *he shall put down all rule and all authority and power*, the meaning is, that all civil and ecclesiastical government, as it is now exercised in the world, or the church, shall be put down, as useless, or disagreeable to the heavenly state, but it does not follow, from hence, that he shall lay aside his own authority and power.

(2.) When it is said, in ver. 25. that *he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet*, it does not imply that he shall not reign afterwards, but that he shall not cease to reign till then, which is the sense of that parallel scripture, in which it is said, *Sit thou at my right-hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool*, Psal. cx. 1. which does not denote that he shall, after his enemies are made his footstool, sit no longer at God's right hand, as advanced there to the highest honour. It is very evident, from several scriptures, as well as our common mode of speaking, that the word *Until* does not always signify the cessation of what is said to be done before, but only the continuance thereof till that time, as well as afterwards : thus it is said, *Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us*, Psal. cxxiii. 2. by which we are not to understand, that, when God extends mercy, the eyes of his people cease to wait upon him, but we will not leave off waiting upon him, until we have received the mercies we hope for ; and, after that, we will continue to wait for those mercies that we shall farther stand in need of ; and elsewhere Job says, *Until I die, I will not remove mine integrity from me ; mine heart shall not reproach me, as long as I live*, Job xxvii. 5—7. This does not imply that he would retain his integrity no longer than he lived. If the word *Until* be frequently used in this sense, then there is no ground to suppose, that when it is said *Christ shall reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet*, that it denotes that he shall not reign to eternity, nor any longer than till all things be subdued unto him : but, indeed, it rather argues, that he shall reign for ever, than that he shall cease to reign ; for when all enemies are removed out of the way, and his right to govern is no longer contested by them, shall he then cease to exercise that sovereign dominion which he has over all things ?

(3.) Since the main difficulty, and the greatest stress of the argument brought against the eternity of Christ's kingdom, is what the apostle farther adds, in ver. 28. of this chapter, that *when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that God may be all in all*. It is said, indeed, that the Son shall be subject to the Father, viz. as man ; but can any one suppose that the Son is not now sub-

ject to the Father? And when it is farther added, God shall be all in all, is it to be supposed that he is not now so? If this be far from being the true meaning of these words, then the sense they give thereof is not just, but we are to understand them thus, that in the end, when all the ends of Christ's administering his mediatorial government in this lower world are answered, and the present form or method of administration shall cease, then it shall appear, that the whole plan thereof had the most direct tendency to promote the Father's glory, or to answer those most valuable ends for which this mediatorial kingdom was erected; and, by this means, it will more eminently appear, than ever it has done before, that this work is from God, and worthy of him. If the Son's kingdom had not been subjected, or subservient to the Father's glory, the subjects thereof would not have been delivered up, or presented to the Father, as the Mediator's trust and charge committed to him; and, if God had not been all in all, or the administration of Christ's kingdom had not been the effect of divine power, in all the branches thereof, it would not have had so glorious and successful an issue, as it will appear to have in the great day. This I take to be the plain sense of this scripture, which cannot reasonably be denied, if we consider that it is very agreeable to our common mode of speaking, to say, that a thing is, when it appears to be what it is, which may be thus illustrated: Suppose a king has gained a victory over his enemies, or quelled some civil broils, or tumults, in his kingdom, he may say, upon that occasion, Now I am king; that is, I appear to be so, or my establishment in the kingdom seems less precarious. We have an instance of the like mode of speaking in scripture, when David says upon the occasion of bringing the affairs of his kingdom to a settled state, after Absalom's rebellion, *Do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?* 2 Sam. xix. 22. that is, I appear to be so, since that, which tended to unhinge, or give disturbance to my government, is removed out of the way.

Moreover, that things are said to be, when they appear to be, is agreeable to that mode of speaking used by the Israelites, when, upon their receiving the fullest conviction that the Lord was God, pursuant to Elijah's prayer, by an extraordinary display of his glory, in working a miracle to confute their idolatry, they fell on their faces, and said, *The Lord he is God*; that is, he now appears to be so, by those extraordinary effects of his power, which we have beheld. If therefore this be no uncommon mode of speaking, why may we not apply it to that text which we are now endeavouring to explain? and so conclude, that the sense but now given of the Son's being subject to the Father, and God's being all in all, contains in it nothing absurd, or contrary to the scripture way of speaking, and con-

sequently the eternity of Christ's kingdom is not overthrown thereby; and therefore we must conclude, that as his kingly government is now exercised in a way agreeable to the present condition of his church, so it shall be exercised in a glorious manner, suited to the heavenly state, when all his saints and subjects shall be brought there.

Thus we have considered Christ, as executing his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; we now proceed to speak concerning the twofold state in which they have been, are, or shall be executed by him; and first concerning his state of humiliation.

QUEST. XLVI. *What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?*

ANSW. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and, after his death, until his resurrection.

QUEST. XLVII. *How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?*

ANSW. Christ humbleth himself in his conception, in that, being from all eternity, the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased, in the fulness of time, to become the Son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

QUEST. XLVIII. *How did Christ humble himself in his life?*

ANSW. Christ humbled himself in his life by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled, and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh; whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

**I**N considering Christ's low and humble state, while he was in this world, we may observe, that this is styled his *emptying himself of his glory*, when he took on him the form of a servant: thus the apostle expresses it, in Phil. ii. 7. for the words,\* which we render, *he made himself of no reputation*, are to be so understood. Now, since his incarnation is so expressed, we must, before we proceed any farther on this subject, enquire, how this was inconsistent with his Godhead? and, whether he might be said, in taking our nature, to empty or hum-

\* *Exortio suavit.*



ble himself? and also, whether his incarnation may, properly speaking, be called a part of his humiliation?

There is a sense in which he may be said to humble himself in his divine nature; as, when we read of *God's humbling himself, to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth*, Psal. cxiii. 6. This is so far from being a dishonour to him, that it is expressive of his glory, as it argues, that there is an infinite distance between him and the creature. In this sense, the second Person of the Godhead might be said to humble himself, in assuming the human nature, and thereby, as it were, casting a veil over his glory. This is such a sense of Christ's humiliation, as denotes infinite condescension, but no diminution, or loss of divine glory; neither can this be styled his emptying himself of glory, or humbling himself, in that sense in which the apostle expresses it, as above mentioned. It cannot be denied, but that Christ's incarnation was the highest instance of condescension; and, if nothing more be intended than this, when persons speak of Christ's humbling himself in his incarnation, or taking our nature into union with his divine, we are far from denying it.

But we are not now speaking of Christ's humbling himself in a relative sense, as God, but his being in a state of humiliation, as God-man Mediator; in which sense, the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person, cannot, properly speaking, be styled a branch of his mediatorial humiliation; for that which tends to constitute the Person of the Mediator, cannot be said to belong antecedently to him as Mediator. For the understanding of which, we may observe,

1. That the Person of Christ is to be considered in two different respects, *viz.* as God, or as Mediator; in the former sense, he was, from eternity, a divine Person, and would have been so, if he had not been Mediator: but when we speak of his Person, as Mediator, we always consider him as God-man.\*

2. Every mediatorial act,† according to the most proper and literal sense thereof, supposes the constitution of his Person, as

\* *When we consider Christ as Mediator, from all eternity, we include, in this idea, his human nature, as what was to be assumed in time. There is a propriety in such a mode of speaking; as, when he is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; in the same sense he might be said to be man from the foundation of the world; and so we understand it, when we speak of him as God-man Mediator, from all eternity.*

† *By Christ's mediatorial acts, we mean every thing that he did and suffered, in the whole course of his obedience, unto death. This is not to be considered in a prophetic sense, as what he did as Mediator, before his incarnation, may be said to be, as he might then, in some respects, be said to execute his prophetic or kingly offices, as Mediator, or as one who designed in the fulness of time, to take our nature into union with his divine Person.*

God-man Mediator, and consequently it supposes him to be incarnate. This is evident, because what he did here on earth was performed by him, in obedience to, and as having received a commission from, the Father; which could not be performed any otherwise than in his human nature.

3. Christ could not be said to assume the human nature into union with his divine Person, as God-man, for that implies a contradiction in terms; nor could it be said, that, before this, he performed any act of obedience to the law, for that supposes the human nature to be assumed, and therefore is consequent to his incarnation.

4. For our farther understanding this matter, we may distinguish between the act of incarnation, or taking the human nature into union with his divine Person; and the state in which he was, after this. The former was an instance of divine condescension; the latter, in the most proper sense, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation. And this leads us to consider the various instances in which Christ is said to have humbled himself, in some following answers, namely, in his birth, life, death, and after his death.

I. Christ humbled himself in his birth; and that,

1. In that he submitted to be in a state of infancy, in common with all, who come into the world. This is the most unactive state of life, in which we are under a natural incapacity of enjoying, or conversing with God, or being of any other use, than objectively, to men, inasmuch as the new-born infant is destitute, at least, of the regular exercise of thought; and is also exposed to various evils, that attend its infantile state; sensible of a great deal of pain and uneasiness, which renders it the object of compassion; and knows not what is the secret cause thereof, nor how to seek redress. This stage of life our Saviour passed through, and thereby discovered a great degree of humiliation.

We have no reason to think, with the Papists \*, that, during his infancy, he had the perfect exercise of his reasoning powers, as though he had been in a state of manhood, as supposing that the contrary would have been a dishonour to him. For, if it were in no wise unbecoming the divine nature to continue its union with his body, when separate from his soul, and therefore in a state of the greatest inactivity, it could be no dishonour for it to be united to his human nature, though we suppose

\* See Bellarm. Tom. I. Lib. IV. cap. 1. who pretends that it is universally held by them, when he says, *Catholicorum, communis sententia fuit, Christi animam ab ipsa sua creatione repletam scientia & gratia; ita ut nihil postea didicerit quod antea nesciret, nec ullam actionem fecerit aut facere potuerit quæ emendatione eguerit. Ita docent cum magistro omnes Theologi & etiam omnes Patres.* This he endeavours to maintain by arguments, which I shall not enter into the particular account of.

it to have been, during his infancy, in that state, in which other infants are, as having the powers and faculties of the soul not deduced into act, as they afterwards are; therefore we can reckon this no other than a groundless and unnecessary conjecture, and cannot but admire this instance of his humiliation, while he was an infant. And, indeed, since he came to redeem infants, as well as others, it was becoming the wisdom and goodness of God, that he should be like them, in most other respects, except in their being born guilty of Adam's sin. If his passing through the other ages of life was designed for our advantage, as he was therein like unto us, and as the apostle says, able to sympathize with us, in the various miseries that attend them; so this affords the like argument for that peculiar compassion, which he has for infants, under those evils that they are liable to.

What we have here asserted, against those who think it a dishonour to him, to suppose, that he was liable to any imperfection, as to knowledge, during his infancy, is not to be reckoned a groundless conjecture, without sufficient reason to support it; since it is expressly said, in scripture, in Luke ii. 52. that he *increased in wisdom as well as stature*; therefore we suppose, that Christ's humiliation began in those natural infirmities, which he was liable to, that are inseparable from a state of infancy.

2. Another branch of Christ's humiliation, respecting his birth, was, that he should be born of a woman of very low degree in the world, rather than of one, whose circumstances and character therein were superior to those of all others, and called for an equal degree of respect from them. The blessed virgin was, indeed in a spiritual sense, honoured and respected above all women, as the salutation given her, by the angel, imports, *Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women*, Luke i. 28. notwithstanding, it is plain she was far from being honourable in the opinion of the world. It is true, she was, of the seed of David, which was a princely line: But the sceptre was now departed from it; therefore, when our Saviour is said to have *the throne of his father David*, chap. i. 32. given him by God, it is certain he had it not from his parents, in a political sense. It is called, indeed, the throne of David, as referring to that promise made to David, 2 Sam. vii. 12,—16. that one should descend from him whom God would *set on his throne, whose kingdom he would establish for ever*. What relates to the establishment of David's kingdom, and the eternity of it, certainly looks farther than the reign of Solomon, or the succession of kings, who were of that line; so that David's kingdom continuing for ever, denotes the perpetuity thereof, in Christ's being set, in a spiritual sense, on his



throne, which seems to be the meaning of the angel's words, *He shall sit on the throne of his father David*. He had not, indeed, a right to David's crown by natural descent from him, for that seems contrary to what was foretold of him; for though it is said, that *a rod shall come of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots*; Isa. xi. 1. which plainly refers to our Saviour, as being of the seed of David; yet it is as plainly intimated, that he was not to inherit the crown of David, in a political sense, by right of natural descent from him, inasmuch as it is said, *He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground*, chap. liii. 2.

To this we may add; that his mother's condition in the world appears to have been very low, in that she was treated with an uncommon degree of neglect as it is particularly remarked, Luke ii. 7. designing to set forth our Saviour's humiliation in his birth, that *she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn*. No room, because his mother was poor, and therefore was treated in such a manner; better accommodations were reserved for others, who, at that time, in which there was great resort to Bethlehem, were better able to satisfy the mercenary demands of those, at whose house they lodged.

As for Joseph his reputed father, he was not one of the great men of this world, but lived by his industry, his occupation being that of a carpenter, Mat. xiii. 55. This was sometimes objected against our Saviour by his enemies, who did not consider, that the mean condition of his parents was a part of that state of humiliation, which he was to pass through, in discharging the work for which he came into the world, and plainly discovered, that he cast the utmost contempt on all the external pomp and grandeur thereof, and thought no honours worthy of his receiving, but such as were of a spiritual nature.

3. There is another circumstance of humiliation, taken from the places of our Saviour's birth and residence. He was born in Bethlehem, a city, which though once esteemed honourable when David dwelt there: yet, at this time, it was reckoned, by the Jews, not as one of the principal cities of Judah. The prophet Micah styles it, *Little among the thousands of Judah*, Micah v. 2. But as for the place of his abode, Nazareth, that was despised, even to a proverb; so that the Jews reckoned, that nothing good or great could come from thence. Thus Nathaniel speaks their common sense, when he says, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* John i. 46. And this was afterwards improved against him, as an argument that he was no prophet; when the Jews say, not concerning this place alone, but the whole country, in which it was, to wit, Galilee, *Out of*

*it ariseth no prophet*, chap. vii. 51. And this is expressly intimated, as a design of providence, that it should be a part of his humiliation, as it is said, *He dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene*, Matt. ii. 23. by which we are not to understand, that any of the prophets foretold this in express words, as having particular reference to the place where he lived: But the meaning is, that as the prophets, with one consent, spake of him, as being in a most low and humble state, so this was a particular instance hereof; and, in that respect, what was spoken by them, concerning his state of humiliation, in various instances, as fulfilled in this \*.

II. Christ's state of humiliation appeared throughout his whole life, and that in several instances.

1. In his subjecting himself to the law; and accordingly he was under an obligation to yield obedience to God in every thing that was required of him, during the whole course of his life. This, indeed, was the necessary result of his incarnation; so that he no sooner became man, but he was under a law, which no creature is, or can be, exempted from. Nevertheless, it was so far founded on his own consent, as he consented to be incarnate, which was certainly an instance of infinite condescension; and his being, in pursuance thereof, actually made under the law, was a branch of his mediatorial humiliation.

1st, He was made under the law, that is, he was obliged to obey the precepts thereof; and that not only of the moral law, which, as to some of its precepts, the best of creatures are under a natural obligation to yield obedience to; but, besides this, there were several positive laws, which he submitted to yield obedience to, in common with these he came to redeem, which obligation he perfectly fulfilled, as it is observed in what he says to John the Baptist, *Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*, Mat. iii. 15. *q. d.* it becometh me, in common with all mankind, to yield perfect obedience to the law; and elsewhere he speaks of himself, as coming into the world *to fulfil the law*, chap. v. 17. And we may observe, that it was not one single act, but a course of obedience, that he performed,

\* This seems to be a better sense of the text, than what is given by some, who suppose, that it was an accomplishment of what is foretold, by the prophets, concerning his being נָצַר *Netzar*, the Branch, in Isa. xi. 1. Jer. xiii. 5. Zech. vi. 12. for that refers to his being of the seed of David, and not to the place of his abode, so that he could not be called the Branch because he dwelt in Nazareth. Others suppose, he is so called from נָזִיר *Nazir*, which signifies, in its application, one that dwelt in Nazareth, and, in its derivation, one that is separated, and that either to God, as the Nazarites were of old, or from men, by some peculiar marks of infamy, or reproach, cast upon him, as Joseph is said to have been, in Gen. xlix. 26. separate from his brethren. These do, in effect assert the same thing that we have observed, viz. that it is the concurrent sense of all the prophets, that he should be in a low and humble state, of which his residing in Nazareth was a particular instance.

during his whole life, as it is said, in this answer, he perfectly fulfilled the law, which is agreeable to that sinless perfection, which is ascribed to him in scripture.

2dly, He was made under the law, that is, he was subject to the curse thereof, that was due to us for sin; which is called, by divines, the maledictory part of it; as it is said, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. As he obeyed what the law enjoined, so he suffered what it threatened, as a punishment due to us for sin.

2. Our Saviour conflicted with the indignities of the world. When he was an infant, *Herod sought his life*; and, had not his parents been warned by God, to flee into another country, he had been slain, as well as the children that were barbarously murdered in Bethlehem, Mat. ii. 13. But he was most persecuted, and met with the greatest indignities, after he appeared publicly in the world; for before that time, till he was about thirty years of age, it might be reckoned a part of his humiliation, that he was not much known therein, and was, at least, a considerable part of that time dependent on, and subject to his parents. It is true, he did not then meet with much opposition from the Jews, while they were in expectation that he would appear as an earthly monarch, and deliver them from the Roman yoke: But when their expectation hereof was frustrated, and they saw nothing in him but what was agreeable to his state of humiliation, they were offended; and, from that time, the greatest injuries and indignities were offered to him, as will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That they did not own his glory as the Son of God, nor see and adore his deity, that was united to the human nature, when, being made flesh, he dwelt among us; and therefore it is observed, that though *the world was made by him, the world knew him not*, John i. 10. or, as the apostle says, concerning him, (for so the words may be rendered) *Whom none of the princes of this world knew*, 1 Cor. ii. 8. they knew, or owned him not to be the Lord of glory; and, as they knew him not, so they desired not to know him; therefore the prophet says, *We hid, as it were our faces from him*, Isa. liii. 3.

(2.) They questioned his mission, denied him to be the Christ, though this truth had been confirmed by so many incontestable miracles: This is that unbelief which the Jews are so often charged with. Thus when they come to him, and tell him, *How long dost thou make us to doubt? tell us plainly, whether thou be the Christ or no?* To which he replies, *I told you, and ye believed not*, and appeals to the works which he did in his Father's name, John x. 24—26. which one would think were a sufficient evidence hereof: But yet they were obstinate and hardened in unbelief; and not only so, but,



(3.) They reproached him, as though he wrought miracles by the power of the devil, which was the most malicious and groundless slander that could be invented, as though Satan's kingdom had been divided against itself, or he would empower a person to work miracles, as a means to promote the interest of God, and thereby to weaken his own, as our Saviour justly replies to that charge, Mat. xii. 24—26. And, indeed, they knew, in their own consciences, that this was a false accusation, and hereby sinned against the greatest light, and fullest conviction; which occasioned him to denounce that terrible and awful threatening against them, that this *sin should never be forgiven them, neither in this world, nor in the world to come.*

(4.) They reproached him as to his moral character, for no other reason, but because he conversed, in a free and friendly manner, with his people, and went about doing them good. If he, at any time, accepted of the least common instances of kindness, or conversed with sinful men, with a design to promote their spiritual advantage, they revile him for it: Thus he says, *The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans, and sinners,* chap. xi. 19.

(5.) It was a matter of common discourse amongst them, that he was a deceiver of the people, though the evidence of truth shone like a sun-beam in every thing that he said and did; Thus it is said *There were much murmuring among the people concerning him; for some said, He is a good man, others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people,* John vii. 12.

(6.) Sometimes they were uneasy at his presence, and desirous to be rid of him, and his ministry. Thus the Gergesenes, because they had suffered a little damage in the loss of their swine, unanimously *besought him to depart out of their coasts,* Matt. viii. 34. Thus they knew not their own privilege, but were weary of him, who was a public and universal blessing to the world.

(7.) Many refused to give him entertainment in their houses, or to treat him with that civility, which a common traveller expects; which occasioned him to complain, that *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,* chap. viii. 20.

(8.) At some times, even before his last sufferings and crucifixion, they attempted to take away his life, and thereby expressed the greatest degree of ingratitude and hatred of him. Their attempts, indeed were to no purpose, because his hour was not yet come: Thus, when he had asserted his divine glory, they not only charged him with blasphemy, but *took up stones to stone him,* John viii. 59. and even his fellow-citizens, among whom he had been brought up, and to whom he had

usually read and expounded the scripture, *on the sabbath-days*; these not only thrust him out of the city, but led him to the brow of an hill, designing to put him to death, by casting him down from it, but he passed through the midst of them, and for the present, escaped their bloody design: This was a more aggravated crime, as it was committed by those who were under peculiar obligations to him, Luke iv. 16. compared with 29, 30. Thus he endured, not only, as the apostle says, *the contradiction of sinners against himself*, Heb. xii. 3. but the most ungrateful and injurious treatment from those, to whom he had been so great a friend, which was a great addition to his sufferings, so that during his whole life, he might be said to have been, as the prophet styles him, *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*, Isa. liii. 3.

3. Our Saviour conflicted with the temptations of Satan: Thus it is said, *He was in all points, tempted, like as we are, yet without sin*, Heb. iv. 15. or, *He suffered being tempted*, chap. ii, 18. though we are not to understand by his being, in all points, tempted, like as we are, that he had any temptations arising in his own soul, as we have, from the corruption of our nature; for this would have been inconsistent with his perfect holiness; and therefore what the apostle says concerning us, that *every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*, James i. 14. is, by no means applicable to him; but that he was tempted by Satan, is very evident from scripture. Some think, that Satan, was let loose upon him, and suffered to express his utmost malice against him, and to practise all those usual methods whereby he endeavours to ensnare mankind, in those remarkable seasons of his life, namely, in his first entrance on his public ministry, and immediately before his last sufferings; the former of these none deny; the latter some think we have ground to conclude from his own words, in which he says, *The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me*, John xiv. 30. where it seems, that by the *prince of this world*, he means the devil, inasmuch as he is so called elsewhere, chap. xii. 31. as well as *the god of this world*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and *the prince of the power of the air*, Eph. ii. 2. If this be the sense of our Saviour's words, *The prince of this world cometh*, it is as if he should say, I expect that, together with my other sufferings, I shall be exposed to the last and most violent efforts that Satan will make. As he assaulted me when I first entered on my public ministry, so he will do it now I am about to close my work on earth: Then he endeavoured to ensnare me with his wiles; now he will endeavour to make me uneasy with his fiery darts. This was, as it were, *the hour of the powers of darkness*: and we may suppose, that if they were suffered, they would attempt to discourage our Saviour, by representing to him the forni-

dableness of the death of the cross, the insupportableness of the wrath of God due to sin, and how much it was his interest to take some method to save himself from those evils that were impending: Thus we may suppose, that our Saviour apprehends the tempter as coming: but we may observe he says, *he hath nothing in me*, that is, no corrupt nature, that shall make me receptive of any impressions, arising from his temptations. His fiery darts, though pointed and directed against me, shall be as darts shot against a rock, into which they cannot enter, but are immediately repelled.

But some think, that by *the prince of this world*, our Saviour does not mean the devil, any otherwise than as he instigated his persecutors to accuse, condemn, and crucify him; and that this is most agreeable to the words immediately foregoing, *Hereafter I will not talk much with you*, q. d. I have not much time to converse with you; for he who will betray me, and those that are sent to apprehend me, are ready to come; I must in a very little time, be accused and tried, and, as the consequence hereof, condemned, though they will find nothing in me worthy of death; I say, since it is questioned, whether this be not as probable a sense of this text, as that above mentioned, and therefore that this cannot be reckoned an instance of Christ's temptation, which was more immediately from Satan, we shall pass it over, and proceed to consider that conflict, which, without doubt, he underwent with the devil, in his first entrance on his public ministry.

This we read of in Matt. iv. 1—11. and Luke iv. 1—13. And, because there is a small difference between these two evangelists, in the account they give of this matter, from whence the enemies of divine revelation take occasion to reproach it, as though it were inconsistent with itself, we shall briefly consider and vindicate it from calumny. We may observe, that Matthew says, *When he had fasted forty days, the tempter came to him*; whereas Luke says, *He was forty days tempted of the devil*; and Mark speaks to the same purpose, Mark i. 13. Matthew seems to speak of his temptations as at the *end of the forty days*; the other two evangelists intimate, that he was tempted more or less, all the forty days. There is no contradiction in these two accounts; Luke only adds a circumstance which Matthew omits, to wit, that Satan assaulted him with various temptations, all the time he was in the wilderness; whereas these, which are recorded by both the evangelists, were towards the end of the forty days.

Again, Matthew, speaking concerning the first of these temptations, introduces the devil, as saying to our Saviour, *If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread*; whereas Luke speaks but of one stone; *Command that this stone*



*be made bread.* This seeming contradiction may easily be reconciled, by considering, that by these *stones* in Matthew, may be meant one of these stones, which is a very common hebraism; as when it is said, that *Jonah was gone down to the sides of the ship*, Jonah i. 5. that is, one of the sides; and elsewhere it is said, that, when Christ was upon the cross, the *thieves*, which were crucified with him, reviled him, Matt. xxvii. 44. which hebraism Luke explains, when he says, *One of the malefactors* railed on him, Luke xxiii. 59. So in this temptation, Satan pointing at some large stone, tempted him to turn it into bread; and Matthew intends no more, when he says, *Command that these stones*, that is, one of them, *be made bread.*

Again, we observe another difference in the account given by Matthew, from that given by Luke, respecting the order of the temptations. Matthew speaks of Satan's tempting him to *fall down and worship him*, as the third and last temptation, which, as it is more than probable, it was; but Luke, inverting the order, lays down this temptation in the second place. However, there is no contradiction between these two; for the credit of an historian is not weakened, provided he relate matters of fact, though he does not, in every circumstance, observe the order in which things were done, especially when nothing material depends upon it; so that, upon the whole, the difference between the accounts of these two evangelists, is so inconsiderable, that it is needless to say any thing farther on that head. We shall therefore proceed to consider Christ's temptation, as we find it here recorded. And,

1. We may observe the time in which he was exposed thereunto, to wit, immediately after his baptism, when he first entered on his public ministry, having but just before received a glorious testimony, by a voice from heaven saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17. upon which it is said, *Then was he led into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil*, or, as Mark farther explains it, *Immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness*, Mark i. 12. From whence we may take occasion to infer,

(1.) That God's children have reason to expect, in conformity to Christ their Head, that, after extraordinary manifestations of divine love, they may sometimes meet with great temptations; so that, as grace is excited by the one, it may be exercised, tried, and the truth thereof more plainly evinced by the other; and, indeed, in us, there is a particular reason for it, which was not applicable to our Saviour, namely, that after great honours conferred upon us, when God is pleased to manifest himself to us, we may be kept, as the apostle says, concerning himself on the like occasion, from being *exalted above measure*, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

(2.) We may, from hence, observe, how Satan shews his malice and envy at God's people, so that when they are raised nearest to heaven, he will use his utmost endeavours to bring them down to hell; and hereby he shews his opposition to God, by attempting to rob him of that glory, which he designs to bring to himself, by these extraordinary manifestations, as well as his people, of the blessed fruits and effects thereof, whereby he thinks to counteract what God is doing for them.

(3.) As our Saviour was tempted just before his entrance on his public ministry, we learn, from hence; that when God designs that his people shall engage in any great, useful, and difficult work, they are like to meet with great temptations, which God suffers that he may put them upon being on their watch, and fortify them against many other temptations, which they may expect to meet with, in the discharge thereof. Many instances of this we have in scripture; particularly in Moses, when called to go into the land of Egypt, Exod. iv. 1, 10, 13. and the prophet Jeremiah, when sent to a *people, whose faces he was afraid of*, Jer. i. 6, 8. Satan suggested several unwarrantable excuses, to discourage them from undertaking the work to which they were called.

2. The next thing to be observed is, the place in which Christ was exposed to these conflicts with the tempter, namely, the *wilderness*. It is not our business to enquire what wilderness it was, whether one of the smaller wildernesses in the land of Judea, or the great wilderness on the other side Jordan, since the scripture is silent as to this matter; though the latter seems more probable, since there are higher mountains in it than in the other; and we read, that that wilderness, in which Christ was tempted, had in it an exceeding high mountain, from whence the devil shewed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. There was in that wilderness mount Nebo, from the top whereof Moses took a view of the whole land of Canaan: But, passing by the consideration of the particular wilderness, in which Christ was tempted, we shall observe, that the place which providence designed for this conflict was a wilderness.

(1.) That he might fast during the time of his being there, that being a place destitute of necessary food: And this was ordered by providence, not only as a particular instance of his humiliation, but that Satan might, from hence, take occasion to suit one of his temptations to his condition, as being an hungred.

(2.) Another reason was, that being separate from all his friends and acquaintance, he might be neither helped nor hindered by them, that so Satan might have the greatest advantage he could desire against him, as solitude is a state most adapt-

ed to temptations ; and consequently that his affliction herein, and the victory he should obtain, should be more remarkable : As none was with him to offer him any assistance, so none could take occasion to claim a part in his triumph over the adversary.

As to what is said, in the text, concerning his being *led by the Spirit, into the wilderness to be tempted*, we humbly conceive that it is the Holy Spirit who is there intended, as the words seem to import ; for it would not be so proper to say, he was led by the impure spirit, the devil, to be tempted of the devil ; and Luke says, that, *being full of the Holy Ghost, he was led by the Spirit*, that is, the Holy Ghost, with whom he was filled, *into the wilderness*, Luke iv. 1. Besides this, it doth not seem agreeable to the holiness of Christ, to suppose, that he went into the wilderness at the motion and instigation of the devil ; for that would have been an unjustifiable action. We may lawfully go, in the way of temptation, when providence leads us there ; but it is not lawful for us to go within the verge of Satan's temptations, by his own instigation. And this seems farther probable, inasmuch as it is said, that, *after the devil was departed from him, he returned in, or by the power of the Spirit, into Galilee*, ver. 14. If he returned by the power of the Holy Spirit out of the wilderness, have we not equal ground to conclude that he was led by him into it at first.

But if it be said, that he did not go into the wilderness by the instigation of the devil, but was carried thither with violence by him : though this would clear our Saviour from the guilt of going by the devil's persuasion in the way of temptation ; yet we can hardly allow that God would suffer the devil to have so much power over Christ's body, as to carry him where he pleased, by a violent motion.

If it be replied to this, that the devil might as well be said to carry him into the wilderness, as to take him up into the holy city, and set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, by a violent motion ; in which sense some understand that passage in the second temptation, wherein it is said, that the devil did so, in ver. 5. what answer may be given to this, will appear from what may farther be said, when we speak of this temptation in particular.

3. We shall now consider the three temptations, mentioned in this scripture, which he was exposed to. And that,

(1.) More generally ; and accordingly we may observe,

1st, That the two first of them were very subtil : so that some would hardly have discerned wherein the sin lay, had he complied with them ; but that will be considered under a following head. We need only remark, at present, that herein the devil acted like a deceiver, and appeared to be, as he is else-



where called, *The old serpent*. In the third temptation, he openly discovered his own vileness, and blasphemously usurped that glory which is due to God alone, when he tempted our Saviour to fall down and worship him.

2dly, In these temptations, he insinuates, that some advantage would accrue to our Saviour from his compliance therewith. This he generally does when he tempts us, wherein he makes an overture of some advantage which we shall gain by our compliance. The advantage he proposed, by the first temptation, was, that hereby he might prevent his starving with hunger. By the second, he proposed, that he might gain popular applause, by casting himself down from the temple, among the people that were walking near it, that they might admire him for his wonderful action; and, in both these temptations, he urges him to give a proof of his being the Son of God, by which means his doctrine might be more readily received. In the third temptation, indeed, the advantage is altogether carnal, and such as, had Satan considered the holiness of the Person he was speaking to, and his contempt of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof, he might easily have supposed that our Saviour would have despised the overture, as well as abhorred the action.

3dly, We may observe, that in the second temptation, the devil refers to a promise contained in scripture, and so puts him upon that which carries in it the appearance of duty, namely, his depending upon the divine protection, in expectation that God would give the angels charge over him: but he quotes the scripture fallaciously, by leaving out a very material thing contained in it, *He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways*, Psal. xci. 11. whereby it is implied, that none have a right to depend on the divine protection, but they who are in the way of duty, which Christ would not have been, had he complied with this temptation.

4thly, Another thing we observe is, that our Saviour not only refused to comply with the temptation, in all these three instances, but he assigned a reason of his refusal, whereby it appears that he did this with judgment; and hereby we are instructed not only to refuse to comply with Satan's temptations, but we should be able to give a reason of our refusal. And, as we farther observe, that our Saviour answers all these temptations, by referring to scripture, which he adhered to, as a rule to direct his conduct, and therein expressed the greatest deference to it: so he teaches us to do the same, as the Psalmist says, *By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer*, Psal. xvii. 4. it is by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, that we quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. vi. 16, 17.

(2.) We shall now proceed to consider the three temptations in particular, together with our Saviour's answer to each of them, and that in the order in which they are related by the evangelist Matthew, in chap. iv.

*First,* The first temptation was, that he would prove his being the Son of God, by commanding stones to be made bread. The subtilty of this temptation consists,

1. In that it seemed not only lawful, but necessary, for Christ, on some occasions, to give a proof that he was the Son of God; and his working miracles was the way by which this was to be done. And it would not seem, to some, unlawful for him to work a miracle in turning stones into bread, since we read, among other miracles, of his multiplying the loaves and fishes to feed the multitude; therefore why may he not produce bread, in a miraculous manner, as well now, as at any other time?

2. Satan puts him upon working this miracle, from a principle of self-preservation which is a duty founded in the law of nature, to supply himself with necessary food, being an hungry; and, if it was lawful for him to produce bread to feed others, was it not lawful to do the same for his own subsistence, especially since he was in a place in which food was not to be obtained by any other means?

3. He pretends to have a great concern for our Saviour's welfare, that so he might not perish with hunger: thus he thought to gain an advantage over him, by a pretence of friendship, as he often does in those temptations he offers to us, to promote our own welfare by unlawful means.

Let us now consider wherein the snare lay, which our Saviour was thoroughly apprized of, and in what respects he would have sinned, had he complied with this temptation. This will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That it was not lawful for him to work a miracle to gratify the devil; and that for this reason in particular, because it would have been contrary to the general end and design of his working miracles, which was only for the advantage of his people, who are the proper subjects of conviction thereby; for him to work them with any other design, would have been to prostitute a sacred ordinance, or to apply it to whom it did not belong. When *the woman of Canaan* came to him, beseeching him to work a miracle, in casting the devil out of her daughter; she being not a member of the Jewish church, or one of *the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, our Saviour tells her, *It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto dogs*; and that he was not *sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, Matt. xv. 24, 26. that is, he was only to work miracles for the conviction of those who were the proper subjects there-

of; and, doubtless, he would not have wrought this miracle at her request, had she not been a proper subject of conviction, which she was, as an elect person, though not by nature an Israelite. Now, to apply this to our present purpose, the devil was not a subject of conviction, and therefore Christ was not obliged to prove himself the Son of God to him; for which reason he would have sinned, had he complied with this temptation.

(2.) Had it been otherwise, it doth not seem necessary, at this time, for him to prove himself to be the Son of God, since that had, but a little before, been sufficiently attested, by a voice from heaven; and therefore to work a miracle to confirm it at present, would argue a disbelief of that testimony.

(3.) For Christ to work a miracle for his own subsistence, seems disagreeable to the main design of his working miracles, which, as was before hinted, was his people's conviction that he was the Messiah; and therefore it does not sufficiently appear that he ever provided for the necessities of himself, or his family in such a way.\* But suppose he had at any time, subsisted himself by working a miracle, it would have argued a distrust of the providence of God to have supplied his hunger, at present, that way; as though God, who had hitherto preserved him without food, could not have continued so to do, as long as he was in the wilderness. And it would also have been contrary to one design of his being led there by the Spirit; which was, that he might humble himself by fasting, as well as conflict with Satan's temptations. Thus concerning the first temptation that was offered by the devil.

Let us now consider Christ's answer to it. This is contained in ver. 4. *It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* The scripture here referred to, is in Deut. viii. 3. where we have the

\* Some ancient and modern writers have supposed, that our Saviour provided for the necessities of his parents in a miraculous way; but the argument, which they bring to prove this, is not sufficiently conclusive, namely, that when he wrought his first public miracle, in Cana of Galilee, mentioned in John ii. his mother desired him to work a miracle to supply them at the marriage-feast with wine, ver. 3. which, they suppose, she would never have thought of, had he not, some time before this, wrought miracles in private to supply her necessities, or provide food for her family: but this does not follow, from her desiring him to do it now, since she might know, that, when he was entered on his public ministry, he was to work miracles: and therefore desired him, on this occasion, to put forth the first instance of his divine power therein. Again, this is said to be the beginning of miracles which he did in Cana of Galilee, ver. 11. and, probably, the first miracle that he wrought in any place; and, indeed, his reply to her, when she desired that he would work this miracle, seems to imply, that he had never wrought miracles to provide for her family, when he says, Woman, what have I to do with thee? *y. d. my working miracles is no part of that obedience which I owe to thee, nor art thou to expect any private advantage thereby; for these are to be wrought with another view.*



very same words ; which, as they are applied by our Saviour to repel this temptation, imply in them two things :

1st, That man hath a better life to secure, than that which is maintained by bread, to wit, the life of the soul : thus it is said, *A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth*, Luke xii. 15. If we take it in this sense, it is as though he should say, If I comply with this temptation, I should sin against my own soul ; and, by using unlawful means to support my natural life, should lose that spiritual life, which consists in the divine favour ; or rather the meaning is,

2dly, That it is by the word of God's power that our lives are upheld ; which power, though it be ordinarily exerted in the use of means, by applying that proper food, which God gives us ; yet this power can sustain us without it, when we are called, in an extraordinary manner by him, to depend upon it, and have ground to conclude, as our Saviour now had, that our dependence should not be in vain. Hitherto he had depended upon it, for almost forty days, since he was first brought into the wilderness ; and therefore he concluded, that it was his duty to exercise the same dependence, so long as he was there.

Secondly, The second temptation was that, in which Satan endeavoured to persuade him to cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple, expecting that God would preserve him safe from danger ; pretending that *he would give his angels charge concerning him, and in their hands they should bear him up, lest, at any time, he should dash his foot against a stone*. This was a snare laid by the subtle adversary, for his life ; and herein we may observe,

1. That as, in the former temptation, he solicited him to distrust the providence of God, and our Saviour's reply to it, contains an intimation of his firm resolution to depend upon it, for his farther preservation, though without the necessary food of life ; now he tempts him, since he is resolved to depend upon the power and providence of God, to do it, in an unlawful way, which is no other than a presuming on the divine protection, without a sufficient warrant.

2. He tempts him to the sin of self-murder, which would be the consequence of his presumption ; for, if providence did not preserve him, which he had not sufficient ground to conclude that it would, when engaged in an unlawful action, such as throwing himself down from the temple would have been, this certainly would have proved his death. And the tempter had something farther than this in view, namely, to put a stop to the work of our redemption, and defeat the great design of Christ's coming into the world ; for, if he had died this way, by his own hands, he would have contracted guilt, and brought

a dishonour to the divine name, rather than have given satisfaction to divine justice, and finished the work he was sent into the world about.

3. In this, Satan tempts him also to a vain-glorious, and fruitless action, which was far from answering any valuable end: his throwing himself down from the top of the temple, among the people, who were gathered together in that public place of resort, might, it is true, have amused them, when seeing a person flying through the air; but it would not have been an expedient to confirm their faith, since there was no explicit appeal to this miracle for the confirmation of any contested doctrine; and therefore it would have contradicted the general design of his working miracles, and, in that respect, been unlawful. Had he been, indeed, at this time, at the bottom of the temple, disputing with the Jews about his mission, and offering to confirm it, by such a miracle as they should chuse; and, had they insisted on it, that he should go up to the top of the temple, and cast himself down amongst them, and signified that this miracle should decide the controversy, for their conviction, I don't apprehend that it would have been unlawful for him to have done it; nor would it have been an instance of presumption for him, to expect the divine protection in so doing. But the case was otherwise circumstanced at present; the devil, who was assaulting him in the wilderness (as was before observed) was no proper subject of conviction; and none of his people were present, to desire that this miracle should be wrought, that they might believe.

Having thus considered the matter of the second temptation in general, it may not be amiss for us to enquire into the meaning of those words, in ver 5. which are generally considered, as preparatory to it: thus it is said, *The devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.* The most common opinion of those, who give their sense of this scripture, is, that the devil had power over the body of Christ, to carry it from place to place; which they reckon not to be an improbable supposition, from the account that some give, who write on the subject of witchcraft, of persons being so carried by him in a preternatural way: but these relations have not much weight in them; and many persons of judgment question the truth thereof; but whether they be true or false, it makes nothing for this purpose, for which they are brought. We do not question, but that the devil, by divine permission, might carry persons, by a violent motion, from place to place; but whether our Saviour was carried by him from the wilderness to the top of the temple, is the question to be debated. They, who suppose this to have been really done, either

think that Christ went there together with, and at the instigation of the devil, without any thing preternatural in his being conveyed there by him; or else, that the devil carried him there from the wilderness through the air; the latter of which is the most commonly received opinion: but we cannot see sufficient reason to acquiesce in either of them.

(1.) As to the former of these opinions, I cannot think it lawful for our Saviour to go from the wilderness to the temple at the instigation of the devil, for that would be go in the way of temptation, without a divine warrant. Had the Spirit of God carried him thither, and encouraged him to throw himself down from thence, it had been his duty to have done it, as much as it was to abide in the wilderness, being led there by the Holy Spirit: But as it would have been unlawful for him to come into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, so it would be no less unlawful to go from thence to the temple, at his desire.

Moreover, it may be greatly questioned, whether our Saviour was fit to take so long a journey, as from the wilderness to the temple, after he had fasted forty days, and, it may be, his strength impaired thereby. And, indeed, when we read, Luke iv. 14. of his return out of the wilderness into his own country, it was by the power of the Spirit, which supplied his want of strength, for so great a journey; therefore, as his coming there was by the Spirit, his safe conduct back again was by the same Spirit. And we cannot suppose that he went out of the wilderness till the Spirit carried him out into his own country; therefore it does not appear that he went to the temple by the solicitation of the devil, to be tempted by him there, and afterwards returned to the wilderness, to submit to his last temptation.

(2.) We cannot altogether give into the other opinion, which, as was before observed, is the most common, namely, that the devil was permitted to carry our Saviour through the air, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, (which seems to be the more direct and literal sense of the words of the evangelist, relating to this matter) for the following reasons.

1st, The pinnacle of the temple, upon which the devil is supposed to have set our Saviour, was, as some writers observed, the sharp point, or apex, or extremity, of a cone, on which it was not possible for the smallest bird to perch; therefore a man could not stand upon it, and consequently Christ could not be said to be sit upon it.

To this, it is true, it is generally replied, that by his being set on a pinnacle of the temple, is meant his being set upon one of the battlements, near one of the spires of the temple, on which



men may conveniently stand. Here they suppose the devil placed our Saviour, and then tempted him to cast himself down from thence. But suppose this be sufficient to account for those words that speak of Christ's being set on a pinnacle of a temple, and so enervates the force of this reason against it, let it be farther considered,

2dly, That it does not seem probable that the devil should have so much power over our Saviour, so as to carry him from place to place at his will: But if it be replied to this, that it contains no absurdity for God to suffer it; nor was it any moral evil in Christ to be thus carried, who must be supposed herein to be altogether passive; let it be farther considered,

3dly, That if the devil really carried him through the air, from the wilderness to the temple, this could not well be done, in an invisible way; for that is contrary to the nature of things; for even the motion of a bird, which is a far less creature, through the air, if it be in the day time, is not invisible. Now if this preternatural motion of our Saviour's body through the air was visible, how comes it to pass that no notice was taken of it by the Jews, which would have been as remarkable an occurrence, as his flying from a pinnacle of the temple to the ground? Some of them, doubtless, would have been amused at it, and probably it would have given them occasion to have said something concerning this preternatural event; and others, it may be, would have reproached him for it; and from his flying by the power of the devil, would have taken occasion to say, that his other miracles were wrought by the same power, which would have given umbrage to the objection, when they said, *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.*

If it be farther objected, that the devil might carry him to the top of the temple by night, and so his motion through the air not be observed. This seems very improbable; for then he must continue there all night, till the people were gathered together the next day on the plain, at the foot thereof, otherwise his casting himself down from thence, would not have answered the end designed thereby, there being none of the Jews present to observe the miracle; and so the devil might have spared the pains of carrying him to a pinnacle of the temple, and might have as well tempted him to have cast himself down from a precipice in the wilderness. We own, notwithstanding, that it might be replied to this, that the devil might raise a thick fog in the air in the day-time, so that the people could not see him conveyed from the wilderness to the temple: But, though this be possible, it doth not seem probable, especially when we consider the other reasons brought against this supposition in general: therefore we must have recourse to some other sense, in which this scripture is to be understood.

Accordingly some suppose that this was only done in a vision, and that he continued all this time in the wilderness; which will in some measure, account for several difficulties, that would arise from the supposition, of the devil's having power over him to carry him from place to place; and this agrees with those other scriptures, that speak of his being tempted forty days in the wilderness. Nevertheless, this sense does not appear very probable, as it supposes the devil to have had a greater power over Christ's imagination, than can readily be allowed of. And it seems to contain an absurdity in this respect; that Christ could not be said to work a miracle, by throwing himself from a pinnacle of the temple, if he were all that while standing in the wilderness; and what proof would that have been of his being the Son of God?

*Object.* If it be objected to this, that many things are said to be done, in vision, by the prophets, which could not well be said to be done otherwise; as the prophet Ezekiel, when he was among the captives in Babylon, is said *to be took by a lock of his head, and, by the Spirit, lifted up between the earth and the heaven, and brought in the visions of God to Jerusalem*, Ezek. viii. 3. the meaning of which is, that he had an impression hereof made on his imagination, not much unlike to a dream, which inclined him, at the same time, to think himself carried to Jerusalem, and to behold the idolatry that was practised there.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, that this was a divine impression upon the soul of the prophet; and we are not, from hence, inclined to think, that because God has sometimes appeared in vision to his people, that the devil was suffered to do so, with respect to our Saviour, or to have power over his imagination, to give it that disturbance, that would result from hence.

Therefore there is another sense, a little different from this, in which we cannot but acquiesce, though not without great deference to those who are otherwise minded, namely, that the devil had neither power over Christ's body, nor actually carried him from the wilderness to a pinnacle of the temple, on the one hand, nor had he power to give disturbance to his imagination on the other: But that he tempted, or endeavoured to persuade him to go with him to Jerusalem, which is called the holy city, and then to go up to the top of the temple, and so cast himself down among the people.

*Object.* The principal objection that is brought against this sense of the words, is taken from its being contrary to the literal, or grammatical sense thereof, inasmuch as the devil is said *to take him up into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of*

*the temple*; which does not seem to imply barely his discoursing with him of going there, and casting himself down from thence.

*Ans.* The only answer that need be given to this objection, is, that, since what is done in vision, is represented in scripture as though it had been actually done, why may we not suppose, that what is offered in conversation, may be represented as though it had been actually done, especially considering, that what was only discoursed of between two persons, is sometimes said to be done. As when the chief butler reports the conversation which he and the chief baker had with Joseph in the prison, he represents Joseph as doing what he only spake of, when he says, *Me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged*, Gen. xli. 13. Therefore there is no absurdity in supposing, that the devil's carrying our Saviour to Jerusalem, and *setting him on a pinnacle of the temple*, denotes nothing else but his tempting him to go there. And, if we take it in this sense, the temptation is no less subtle, or pernicious, in the design thereof; and our Saviour's answer to it, is equally opposite, and to the purpose, as though we suppose the devil had power to carry him there.

We shall now consider Christ's answer to this temptation, which is contained in these words, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, in which he refers to the words of Moses, Deut. vi. 16. which though they more immediately relate to the people murmuring, and questioning, whether *God was among them or not*, Exod. xvii. 7. upon which occasion the name of the place was called Massah; yet, inasmuch as there are various ways of tempting God, this general prohibition might well be applied by our Saviour to his own case, in answer to Satan's temptation; and then it is as though he should say, I will not tempt the Lord my God, either by desiring a farther proof of my Sonship, which has so lately been attested, by a voice from heaven; or rather, I will not tempt him, so as to expect his protection, when engaged, according to thy desire, in an unlawful action.

*Thirdly*, The third and last temptation, which was the most audacious, vile, and blasphemous of all, is contained in ver. 8, 9. in which Satan makes an overture of the *kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof*, to him, provided he would fall down and worship him; in which we may observe,

1. Something preparatory to it, when it is said, *The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them*. Whether this was actually done, or he only tempted him to go up into an high mountain, which was more convenient for this purpose,



I will not peremptorily determine. There are not so many difficulties attending the supposition, that it was actually done, as there were in the former temptation. If it be concluded, that it was actually done, it is very much to be doubted, whether there was any mountain so high, as that he might, from thence have a prospect of the kingdoms of the world; or if there was an exceeding high mountain in the wilderness where Christ was tempted, yet, if we consider the nature of the vision, there are two things that would hinder a person's seeing the kingdoms of the world, though it were from the highest mountain.

(1.) The convexity, or unevenness of the surface of the earth, which would hinder the strongest eye from seeing many kingdoms of the world; besides, the sight would be hindered by other mountains intervening.

(2.) If there were several kingdoms, or countries, which might be beheld from the top of an exceeding high mountain, yet the organ of sight is too weak to reach many miles. Therefore, when Moses was commanded, by God, to go up to the top of mount Pisgah, to take a view of the whole land of Canaan, it is generally thought there was something miraculous in his strengthening his sight, to see to the utmost bounds thereof; accordingly it is said, that the *Lord shewed him all the land*, Deut. xxxiv. 1. Now this can hardly be applicable to the case before us, relating to the devil's shewing our Saviour all the kingdoms of the world; therefore the best and most common sense that is given hereof, is, that he made a representation of the kingdoms and glories of the world in the air, and presented them to our Saviour's view in a moment; and a mountain was more convenient for this purpose, than if he had done it in a valley; which seems to be the most probable sense of this text.

2. We shall now consider the temptation itself, which is mentioned in ver. 9. *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* The evangelist Luke adds something that is omitted by Matthew, as a farther illustration of this temptation namely, that the *power* of conferring a right to the kingdoms of the world, was *delivered unto him*; and that *to whomsoever he will he gives it*, Luke iv. 6. In this temptation, we may observe,

1<sup>st</sup>, The abominable pride and insolence of the devil, and his appearing herein to be the father of lies, nothing could be more false, than for him to assert that the world was given to him to dispose of, as he pleased; whatever hand he may have in disposing of it among his subjects, by divine permission: yet he has no right to do this; so that herein we may observe his proud and blasphemous insinuation, in pretending to have a grant from God to dispose of that which he reserves in his own hand, to give as he pleases.

2dly, All that he pretends to give our Saviour, is only *the kingdoms of the world*; and, in exchange for them, he must quit his right to that better world, which he had, by inheritance, a right to, and a power to dispose of, which the devil has not.

3dly, He pretends to give our Saviour nothing but what, as God and Mediator, he had a right to. This Satan maliciously questions, when, by the overture he makes thereof, he insinuates, that he must be beholden to him for it.

4thly, This he proposes, as an expedient for him, to arrive to glory and honour an easier way, than to attain it by sufferings; therefore it is as though he should say; thou expected a kingdom beyond this world, but there are many troubles that lie in the way to it; whereas, by following my advice, and complying with this temptation, thou mayest avoid those sufferings, and enter into the present possession of the kingdoms and glories of this world; by which, it is probable, he makes him an overture of the whole Roman empire: But this our Saviour despises, for he offered it, who had no right to give it; and the terms, on which the overture was made, were very dishonourable; and the honour itself was such, as he did not value, for his kingdom was not of this world. If he had aimed at earthly grandeur, he might easily have attained it; for we read, that he might once, not only have been made a king, but that the people intended to come and *make him so by force*, John vi. 15. upon which occasion, he discovered the little value he had for this honour, by his retiring from them into a *mountain himself alone*, rather chusing to continue in the low estate, which he designed to submit to in this world, as a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Thus concerning the overture made by Satan to our Saviour. Now let us consider the condition on which he made it, namely, that he *should fall down and worship him*; in which we may observe his pride, in pretending to have a right to divine honour, and how he attempts to usurp the throne of God, and that to such a degree, that no one must expect favours from him, without giving him that honour, that is due to God alone.

Again, he boldly and blasphemously tempts Christ to abandon and withdraw himself from his allegiance to God, and, at the same time, to deny his own deity, as the object of worship, and thereby to cast away that crown of glory, which he has by nature, and to put it on the head of his avowed enemy. Thus concerning the third and last temptation; we may consider,

3. Christ's reply to it, together with the repulse given to the adversary, and victory obtained over him, who hereupon *departed from him*; where we may observe,

(1.) That he again makes use of scripture, referring to what

is said therein, in different words, though the sense be the same, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and to him shalt thou cleave*, Deut. vi. 13. and chap. x. 20. This is a duty not only founded in scripture, but in the law of nature, and may be proved from the perfections of God, and our relation to him, as creatures.

(2.) Our Saviour detests the temptation with the greatest abhorrence, can no longer bear to converse with the blasphemer, and therefore says, *Get thee hence, Satan*. He commands him to be gone, and Satan immediately leaves him, being, as it were, driven away by his almighty power. This is more than we can do; nevertheless, in the like case, we ought, as the apostle did, to *beseech the Lord that he might depart from us*, 2 Cor. xii. 8. or, to use our Saviour's words on another occasion, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan*. Thus Christ's temptations, though very grievous and afflictive, were not only surmounted, but the adversary, that assaulted him, was overcome by him, in his own Person. (a)

From what hath been said, concerning Christ's temptations, we infer,

(a) This portion of scripture has been subjected to much examination, which has resulted in a variety of opinions with respect to the things contained in it. We suppose the major part of christians take the whole as a literal representation of the facts; such seem to choose the safest side. There is another opinion, which is entertained by many; that the whole was a vision; the Saviour's being in the wilderness; his fasting for forty days; the several temptations; and the relief afforded by the angels.

This latter interpretation is an assumption of unwarrantable latitude in the interpretation of the word of God. All are realities, even the presence and temptations of Satan, and the resistance given him; but the temptations may have been proposed to the Saviour, when exhausted with hunger, and when sunk into some species of waking vision, little distinguishable from a dream.

Satan has not the power of forcing men into sin; his temptations are always disguised; for the knowledge that they are such, is the strongest motive for resisting them; if therefore Satan had discovered himself to Jesus in a visible form, it would not only have been contrary to his usual course, but must have ensured him a defeat.

The replies of Christ were in every instance by scriptures recollected, which leads us to think that it was all before the eye of his mind only; also one of Satan's temptations was from scripture; these things well accord with its having been in vision.

The changes of place seem to have been too sudden, and also impracticable. He was in the wilderness when the temptations began, and when they ended; which agrees with the supposition that his rapid transition to a pinnacle of the temple, and from thence to a very high mountain, were only in idea.

It is very unaccountable that he should have been transported to the battlements of the temple for a dangerous place, when the country afforded precipices enough, and still more so, that this could have taken place without publick observation; but such flights of the imagination, when the body is fainting with hunger, would not be extraordinary; nor would it excite any wonder, if the person in such exigency should find Satan occupied in giving a turn to his ideas.



1st, The desperate and unparalleled boldness of Satan, in that though he knew well enough that Christ was the Son of God, and therefore able not only to resist, but to destroy him; yet he should venture thus to assault him: whereas, at other times, he seems to be afraid of him, which occasioned him to say, *Art thou come to destroy us before the time?* Mark i. 24. and elsewhere, *Art thou come to torment us before the time?* Matt. viii. 29. Besides, he knew, that by this action, his own guilt and misery would be increased; but what will not malice, and a deep-rooted hatred of God and godliness, prompt persons to! The attempt was certainly most unfeasable, as well as prejudicial to himself. Did Satan suppose that he should gain a victory over him? Could he think, that he, who was God, as well as man, was not more than a match for him? It may be, he might hope, that though the human nature of Christ were united to the divine, yet it might be left to itself; and then he thought it more possible to gain some advantages against it, which was a groundless supposition, and altogether unbecoming the relation that there is between these two natures: and it was also impossible that he should be overcome, inasmuch as he was filled with the Holy Ghost from his first conception, and the unction which he had received from the Holy Ghost, would have effectually secured him from falling. Whether the devil knew this, or no, he did not consider it; and therefore this attempt against our Saviour, was an instance of the most stupendous folly in him, who is described as the old serpent for his great subtilty.

2dly, From Christ's temptation, we may infer the greatness

There is not a mountain on earth from whence all the kingdoms are visible; here therefore we are obliged to give up the literal sense, and may discover an index to the interpretation of the other temptations.

It is not called a vision; in like manner neither did Micaiah nor Jacob denominate their visions. They represented what appeared to them; and so we presume Jesus related these things to his disciples just as they appeared to his mind.

Satan, though he can and does in various ways, by external and internal means, through the medium of our bodies, suggest thoughts, and thus take possession of our hearts in a certain sense; yet he knows not our thoughts; it is the attribute of God only to search the heart. Every thing acted by Satan in this instance could have taken place without his knowing the mind of Christ.\* If it had not been in vision, then Jesus must have spoken audibly his respective answers; Satan would have known them, and, we presume, in some instance replied; but there is not one reply of Satan, which is an additional proof that he suggested the temptations, and the Saviour resisted them by mental answers, with which the enemy was unacquainted. Adopting this general view, the particular parts will be easily understood.

\* It is highly probable that Satan did not know that this was the Christ; he speaks doubtfully of his being the "Son of God," this he had heard, we suppose, at his baptism, a short time before. Satan is not omnipresent, nor omniscient, and probably knew less than the angels of these things which they desired to pry into. Christ's divinity was chiefly concealed thirty years, not always shown in his life, nor at his death. It was the man only that could be thus humbled and tempted; God neither tempts nor can be tempted by any.

of his sufferings. It could not but be grievous to him to be insulted, attacked, and the utmost endeavours used to turn him aside from his allegiance to God, by the worst of his enemies. And, as Satan's temptations are not the smallest part of the affliction of his people, they cannot be reckoned the smallest part of his own; nevertheless, the issue thereof was glorious to himself, and shameful to the enemy that attacked him.

3dly, This affords encouragement to believers, under the various temptations they are exposed to. They are not, indeed, to think it strange that they are tempted, inasmuch as they are herein conformed to Jesus Christ, the Captain of their salvation; but they may, from Christ's temptation, be instructed that it is not a sin to be tempted, though it be a sin to comply with Satan's temptations; and therefore that they have no ground to conclude, as many do, that they are not God's children, because they are tempted. Moreover, they may not only hope to be made partakers of Christ's victory, as the fruits and effects thereof redound to the salvation of his people; but to receive help and succour from him when they are tempted, as he, who *suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted*, Heb. ii. 18. Thus concerning Christ's humiliation, as tempted.

4. Christ humbled himself, in being subject to those sinless infirmities, which were either common to the human nature, or particularly accompanying that low condition in which he was. Some of those afflictions, which he endured, took their rise from the sin or misery of others: thus he is said to have been *afflicted in all the afflictions of his people*, Isa. lxiii. 9. which is an instance of that great sympathy and compassion which he bore towards them. Sometimes he was grieved for the degeneracy and apostacy of the Jewish nation, the contempt they cast on the gospel, whereby his ministry, though discharged with the greatest faithfulness, was, through the unbelief of those among whom he exercised it, without its desired success: thus he is represented by the prophet, as complaining, *I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain*, chap. xlix. 4. and, when he had almost finished his ministry among them, and looked upon Jerusalem as a self-ruined people, *He beheld the city and wept over it*, Luke xix. 41. And, besides this, he was sometimes grieved for the remainders of corruption, and the breakings forth thereof in those whom he loved, in a distinguishing manner: thus he was sometimes afflicted in his own spirit, by reason of the hardness of the heart of his disciples, and the various instances of their unbelief.

These afflictions, more especially, might be called relative, as the occasion thereof was seated in others: but there were many afflictions which he endured that were more especially

personal ; such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, weariness in travelling to and fro in the discharge of his public ministry ; and that poverty and want of the common necessities of life, which he submitted to, whose divine bounty supplies the wants of all creatures. These, and many other sufferings, he endured in life, which were agreable to that state of humiliation, in which he was, during the whole course thereof. And this leads us,

*Secondly,* To consider his humiliation immediately before, as well as in and after his death.

**QUEST. XLIX.** *How did Christ humble himself in his death ?*

**ANSW.** Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors, having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

**QUEST. L.** *Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death ?*

**ANSW.** Christ's humiliation after his death, consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into hell.*

**I**N considering the subject matter of these answers, we are led to take a view of our Saviour, in the last stage of life, exposed to those sufferings which went more immediately before, or attended his death. And,

**I.** Let us consider him in his sufferings in the garden, when his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; and he desired his disciples, not only as an instance of their sympathy with, and regard to him in his agony, that they would tarry at a small distance from him, while he went a little farther, and prayed, as one that tasted more of the bitterness of that cup, which he was to drink, than he had done before ; but pressed this upon them, as what was necessary to their own advantage, when he says, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation,* Matt. xxvii. 38, 39. 41. But they seemed very little concerned, either for his distress, or their own impending danger ; for, when he returned, he found them asleep, and upbraids them for it, *What, could ye not watch with me one hour ?* ver. 40. and



afterwards, though he had given them this first kind and gentle reproof, for their unaccountable stupidity, and repeated his charge, that they should watch and pray; yet, when he came a second time, he found them asleep again, ver. 43. This was, doubtless, an addition to his afflictions, that they, who were under the highest obligation to him, should be so little concerned for him.

II. After this he was betrayed by Judas, a pretended friend, which added to the affliction. This does not argue any unwillingness in him to suffer, as is evident from his own words, some time before, viz. *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?* Luke xii. 50. As also from his going up to Jerusalem with that design, as knowing that his hour was at hand. How easily might he have declined this journey, had he been unwilling to suffer? And, if he thought it his duty to be at Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover, which was not absolutely necessary, (for all were not obliged to come there at the feast) he might, notwithstanding, had he been unwilling to suffer, have went there privately: but, instead of that, he made a more public entrance into it than was usual, riding in triumph, and accepting of the loud acclamations and hosannas of the multitude, which, any one might suppose, would draw forth the envy of his inveterate enemies, and sharpen their malice against him, and thereby hasten the execution of their bloody design.

Again, that he did not suffer unwillingly, appears, in that, when the band of officers, being led by Judas, was sent to apprehend him, *He asks them, whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth; Jesus saith unto them, I am he;* upon which we read, that *they went backward, and fell to the ground,* John xviii. 4—6. and gave him an opportunity to make his escape, had he intended to decline these last sufferings: but he not only delivered himself into their hands, but prohibited the overture of a rescue, which Peter attempted in his favour, ver. 10, 11. As to what concerns his being betrayed into the hands of his enemies, by one of his disciples, this is often mentioned, as a very considerable part of his sufferings: the price which the traitor demanded, or which was the most they would give for this barbarous and inhuman action, was thirty pieces of silver.\* This being foretold by the prophet, is represented as an instance of the highest contempt that could be cast upon him: he calls it *a goodly price that I was prized at of them,* Zech. xi. 13. it was the price of a *servant*, or slave, when *pushed by the ox, so that he died,* Exod. xxi. 32. This shews how little he was

\* A piece of silver is the same which is elsewhere called a shekel, which was valued at about half a crown, English money; so that the whole price for which our Saviour was sold into their hands, was no more than three pounds fifteen shillings.

valued, by those who were under the highest obligations to him. And providence permitted it to be a part of his sufferings, that we may learn from hence, that hypocrites sometimes mix themselves with his faithful servants, who, notwithstanding the mask, or disguise of religion, which they affect, their hypocrisy will, one time or other, be made manifest. This was not a wound given by an open enemy, but a pretended friend, and therefore more grievous; and this might also give occasion to some to cast a reproach on his followers (for what will not malice sometimes suggest) as though they were all like him; and their pretence to religion were no more than hypocrisy.

III. Another instance of Christ's humiliation was, in that he was forsaken by his disciples: thus we read, that when he was apprehended, *all the disciples forsook him and fled*, Matt. xxvi. 56. from whence we may learn,

1. How unable the best of God's people are to exercise that holy courage and fortitude that is necessary in trying dispensations of providence, especially when destitute of extraordinary assistance from the Spirit of God.

2. This was ordered by providence, to add weight to Christ's sufferings, in which none stood with him to comfort or strengthen him; as the apostle Paul says, *At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me*, 2 Tim. iv. 16. which could not be otherwise than a very afflictive circumstance; nevertheless,

3. There was a farther design of providence in permitting this cowardise, namely, that they might not suffer with him; and therefore it is observed, by one of the evangelists, that when our Saviour was apprehended by the officers, he desired leave of them, that his disciples might *go their way*, John xviii.

8. If they had been apprehended, it may be, they might have been accused, condemned, and crucified with him; which might give occasion to some to suppose, that they bore a part in the purchase of our redemption; which belonged to him alone; and therefore it is said, concerning him, *I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with me*, Isa. lxiii.

3. To this we may add,

IV. That it was another part of Christ's sufferings, that he was disowned and denied by Peter; since this would give occasion to some to think that he was not worthy to be acknowledged by his friends, while he was insulted and persecuted by his enemies. In the account the evangelist gives of this matter, Matt. xxvi. 69—72. we may observe,

1. That Peter was not, at this time, in the way of his duty, though, probably, it was love to our Saviour, and a desire to see the issue of his trial, that might occasion his going into the High Priest's Palace; yet this he had no call to do at present,

it was a running into the midst of danger, especially considering our Saviour, as in the scripture but now referred to, had got leave for his disciples to withdraw. This, Peter ought to have done : for, as we are not to decline sufferings when called to bear them, so we are not, without a sufficient warrant, to rush into them, to go, as he did, in the way of temptation.

2. It was not only shame that induced him to deny our Saviour, but fear ; for, it is probable, he might be informed that the High Priest asked him concerning his disciples, as well as his doctrine, therefore he might think, that by owning him and his doctrine, he might be exposed to suffer with him ; which, notwithstanding his self-confident resolution a little before, when he said, *Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee*, ver. 35. he was now afraid to do.

3. He was not only accosted by the damsel, who told him, that he was with Jesus of Galilee ; but he was attacked by *one of the servants of the High Priest, being his kinsman, whose ear Peter cut off*, who said, *Did I not see thee in the garden with him ?* John xviii. 26. This still increased his fear ; for he not only appeared as a witness against him, and charged him with having been with him in the garden, but also intimates, that he attempted to rescue him, and that by force of arms, which, as he apprehended might render him obnoxious to the lash of the law as endeavouring to make a riot, for which he concluded that he was liable to suffer punishment ; and the person, whose ear he cut off, being the High Priest's kinsman, this would lay him still more open to his resentment. Thus Peter, through the weakness of his faith, and the prevalency of his fear, denied our Saviour ; and this was thrice repeated with curses and execrations annexed to it, which still increased his guilt, tended to expose religion, as well as cast a reproach on our Saviour, who was then bearing his testimony to the truth.

V. Another instance of Christ's humiliation was, that he was scorned and rejected by the world ; scorned, as though he had been inferior to them. Thus he is represented by the Psalmist, as saying, *I am a worm and no man ; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn ; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head*, Psal. xxii. 6, 7. This was, doubtless, a malicious design, to fill the minds of men with prejudice against it, and make them ashamed to own it. Our Saviour puts these both together, when he speaks of persons being *ashamed of him, and of his words*, Mark viii. 38. They had often rejected him, by their unbelief ; and this crime was the greater, because they were under the greatest obligations to the contrary. How often did he invite them, in the most affectionate manner, to come to him, and annex hereunto a promise of eternal life ? We find, notwithstanding, that he



had reason to complain, as he does, *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*, John v. 40.

Here we might observe the temper of the Jews, before he appeared publickly among them, to have been different from what it was afterwards. When John the Baptist, his fore-runner told them, that he would shortly be made manifest to Israel, multitudes flocked to his ministry, counted him as a great prophet, and rejoiced in his light for a season, and, at the same time, were baptized, and professed their willingness to yield obedience to Christ. But all this was upon a groundless supposition, that he would appear as an earthly monarch, erect a temporal kingdom, bring all other powers into subjection to it, and so deliver them from the Roman yoke, and advance them to great honours in the world: but, when they saw it otherwise, and that he appeared in a low humbled state, and professed, that his kingdom was not of this world, and therefore his subjects must seek for a glory that lies beyond it, which cannot be beheld, but by faith, and, in the expectation hereof, take up their cross, and follow him, immediately they were offended in him: thus the prophet foretels, that he should be for a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel*, Isa. viii. 14. and the Psalmist styles him, *The stone which the builders refused*, Psal. cxviii. 22. both which predictions are applied to Christ by the apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. This was also foretold by Simeon, concerning our Saviour, when he was in his infancy, *Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign, which shall be spoken against*, Luke ii. 43. And this offence taken at him, is intimated to have been almost universal, as appeared from the small number that adhered to him, when he was here on earth, which gave him occasion to say, *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me*, Matt. xi. 6.

This treatment he met with throughout the whole course of his ministry, when they loaded him with the most injurious reproaches: but, immediately before his death, they filled up the measure of their iniquity, by reproaching him to the utmost; then it is observed that they blasphemed, and cast contempt upon him, with respect to all those offices which he executes as Mediator. As to his prophetic office, with what abominable profaneness do they speak of the sacred gift of prophecy, which their fathers always counted a peculiar glory, which was conferred upon some of them, whereby they were honoured above all other nations in the world! And what contempt do they cast on him, who had sufficiently proved himself to be greater than all other prophets; when as it is said, *They smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?* chap. xxvi. 67,

68. They also expressed their blasphemy in contemning his priestly office, when they say, *He saved others, himself he cannot save*, chap. xxvii. 42. and also his kingly, when, in derision, they put on him a scarlet robe, platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, *Hail king of the Jews*, ver. 28, 29.

They also expressed the greatest contempt of him, by preferring a vile and notorious criminal, who was a robber, and a murderer, before him; and accordingly, as the prophet says, *He was numbered with the transgressors*, as though he had been the greatest of them, whereas he had *done no violence; neither was any deceit in his mouth*, Isa. liii. 9, 12. Thus the apostle tells them, *Ye denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you*, Acts iii. 14. when Pilate made an overture to release him, they cried, *with one consent, Not this man, but Barabbas*, John xviii. 39, 40.

From hence we may learn,

1. That the best of men are not to expect to pass through the world without reproach, or contempt, how exact, innocent or blameless, soever their conversation be.

2. We are not to judge of persons, or things, especially in matters of religion, merely by the opinion of the world concerning them; since it is no uncommon thing for religion itself to be had in contempt, as well as those who adhere to it.

3. We ought not to have respect to the praise or esteem of men, as a motive to induce us to choose and adhere to the way of God and godliness: thus our Saviour says, *I receive not honour from men*, John v. 41. that is, I value it not, so as to regulate my conversation thereby; and then he adds, *How can ye believe which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only*, ver. 44.

4. Let us not think the worse of Christ, or his gospel, because they are reproached, but rather, as the apostle adviseth, *Go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach*, Heb. xiii. 13. and not only be content to bear it, but count it our honour; as he says elsewhere, concerning himself, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Gal. iv. 14.

5. Let us take heed, that while we seem to honour Christ by our profession, and testify our abhorrence of the contempt that was cast on him, by his enemies, we do not reproach him by our practice; and that either by sinning presumptuously, which is called, *A reproaching of the Lord*, Num. xv. 30. or not by reproving and bearing our testimony against those who blaspheme and revile him; by which means, we shall partake with them in their crime.

VI. Our Saviour was condemned by Pilate. The former indignities offered him, were without any pretence, or form of law; but now he is set before a court of judicature, and there tried, and sentence passed immediately before his crucifixion. In this they had no regard to the exercise of justice, nor desire to proceed in a legal way with any good and honourable design, but to prevent the inconvenience that would have arisen from their putting him to death in a riotous and tumultuous manner, without the form of a trial. This they had in some particular instances, at other times, designed, or attempted to do, but they thought it not a safe way of proceeding; since they might afterwards have been called to an account for it, by the civil magistrate, as the town-clerk says, upon occasion of the tumult at Ephesus, *We are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar*, Acts xix. 40. Therefore our Saviour, being apprehended, is brought before Pilate, the Roman governor; and there were the chief priests and elders met together, as his accusers and prosecutors; and the whole process was the most notorious instance of injustice, that ever was practised in any court of judicature in the world. Whatever pretence of law there might be, the assembly was certainly tumultuous. It is not usual for persons who are tried for capital matters to be insulted, not only by the rude multitude of spectators that are present, but by the judge himself, as our Saviour was, being spit upon, buffeted, and smote with the palms of their hands; and Pilate also, with a sarcastic sneer, unbecoming the character of a judge, says, *Behold the Man; Behold your King*, John xix. 5, 14. Here we may observe,

1. Concerning his persecutors, that they sought false witnesses against him, that is, they endeavoured to persuade, or bribe any that they could find, among the most vile and profligate wretches, to come in against him; nevertheless, they could not bring this matter to bear for some time: thus, it is said, *They sought false witness against Jesus to put him to death, but found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none*, Matt. xxvi. 59, 60. The evidence that many gave was not regarded, and therefore they were set aside; at last they found two, whom they depended on, as legal evidences: but it is observed, that *their witness did not agree together*, Mark xiv. 59. and, if they had agreed in their testimony, the matter alleged against him was no crime, namely, *We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands; and, within three days, I will build another made without hands*, ver. 58. which refers to what he had said when he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, and foretelling his resurrection from the dead, he uses this metaphorical way of speaking; that when they had destroyed this temple, meaning his



body, he would raise it up in three days. We will suppose, that the Jews, then present, did not understand what he meant by this expression, or that he did not explain it, as the evangelist does: but let them take it in what sense they would, it carries in it no crime for him to say so; and therefore it is observed, that when this was witnessed against him, though the High Priest urged him to make a reply, *he held his peace, and answered nothing*, because there was nothing alleged worth an answer; the thing he was charged with, carried in it its own confutation, and inferred not the least degree of guilt in him. This his enemies themselves seemed to be sensible of; and therefore they ask him this trying question, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* expecting that his reply to this would have afforded matter for them to proceed upon his conviction. To this our Saviour gives a direct answer, saying, *I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*, ver. 62. Here he was called to give a reply; the question was worthy of an answer; and therefore he does not, on this occasion, hold his peace, but witnessed a good confession, though he knew it would cost him his life.

2. Some things may be observed concerning Pilate's conduct in his trial; as,

(1.) He acted contrary to that good advice that was given him by his wife; which, because the Evangelist thinks it worthy to be taken notice of, as occasioned by a dream, in which she told him, *She had suffered many things because of him*, Matt. xxvii. 19. gives ground to conclude that it was a divine dream, which rendered the advice more solemn, and, as such, deserved his regard.

(2.) He acted against the dictates of his own conscience; for *he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy*, Matt. xv. 20. and therefore he ought to have stopped all farther proceedings, as in cases of malicious prosecutions; and it farther appears that he acted against his conscience, in that he took *water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Person*, Matt. xxvii. 24.

(3.) He appears to have been a very mean-spirited man, and therefore was apprehensive that the Jews had he released our Saviour, would have accused him to Cæsar, for sparing one whom they would have pretended to have been an usurper, and a rebel, inasmuch as he is styled King of the Jews. Accordingly he feared that he should have been turned out of his place, or otherwise punished, provided the matter were not fully heard, or the misrepresentations that might be made thereof, were believed by him. This seems the main reason of his delivering our Saviour up to them, to be crucified: thus it is

observed, that Pilate first sought out to release him ; but, upon the Jews saying, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat, and, in haste, delivered him unto them to be crucified*, John xix. 12, 13, 16.

(4.) When he thought it his interest to comply with the Jews in this matter, he did not pass sentence on him himself, it may be, thinking that not so adviseable, as being contrary to the profession he had a little before this, made of his innocency : but he asked his prosecutors, what he should do with him ? which was a flagrant instance of barbarity and injustice, in one who had the character of a judge or magistrate.\*

VII. Our Saviour was tormented by his persecutors, scourged, buffeted, smitten with the palms of their hands, crowned with thorns, which, as most divines suppose, pierced his head, and drew blood from thence, which was a part of the torments he endured. And to this we may add, that they compelled him to bear his cross, till his strength was so exhausted, that he could carry it no longer ; and then they obliged one Simon, a Cyrenian, *to bear it* ; or, as Luke says *to bear it after him*, John xix. 17. compared with Luke xxiii. 26. that is, as some suppose, to help him to carry it, going behind, and bearing a part of the weight thereof. These things he endured, immediately before his crucifixion, from wicked men, divested of all humanity, as well as religion : but still there is something more afflictive than this, which he endured ; accordingly it is farther observed,

VIII. That he conflicted with the terrors of death, felt, and bore the weight of God's wrath ; these were the sufferings which

\* *Pilate is characterized, by various writers, as a man of inhuman cruelty, insatiable avarice, and inflexible obstinacy. An instance of his cruelty we have mentioned in Luke xiii. 1. in his mingling the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices, that is, as some suppose he fell upon them without a fair trial, and murdered them while they were engaged in a solemn act of religious worship, offering sacrifice at Jerusalem, in one of the public festivals ; pretending, though without a fair trial that they were of the same mind, with Judas of Galilee, who had persuaded many of the Galileans to refuse to give tribute to Cæsar. A learned writer (Vid. Grot. in Luke xiii. 1.) supposes, not only that this was the occasion of this inhuman action, which is not improbable, (though Josephus makes no mention of it) but also that this is one of those things which was reported to the emperor, who did not approve of it. And afterwards there were other instances of his oppression and mal-administration laid before Tiberius, which, had not that emperor's death prevented, it would have occasioned his disgrace ; and afterwards he fell under the displeasure of his successor, and was not only turned out of his procuratorship, but reduced to such miserable circumstances, that he laid violent hands on himself, (Vid. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. 7. cap. 26. & Joseph. Antiq. Lib. XVIII. cap. 5 & Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. II. cap. 7.) Therefore we may well suppose, that though he had, in other respects no regard to the Jews ; yet, on this occasion, he feared, lest they should report his vile actions to the emperor, and that they would represent this to him with a malicious insinuation, that he was his enemy, because he spared our Saviour : this occasioned him to deliver him up to them, to do what they would with him.*

he endured, more especially in his soul. From whence we may observe, that the death he was going to endure, was exceeding formidable to him, and accompanied with great terrors; therefore there must certainly be some bitter ingredient in it, more than in the death of others. If we enquire what it was therein that seemed so terrible to him, when many of the martyrs, who have been, as the apostle says, *pressed out of measure above strength*, 2 Cor. i. 8. that is, suffered as much as frail nature could well bear, have endured it without any dread of the wrath of God, the sting and bitterness thereof being taken away; why then should our Saviour, who never contracted the least degree of guilt, have any conflict of this nature in his own spirit? To this it may be replied, that there were some things in his death that rendered it more formidable, than it ever was to any of his saints and martyrs. For,

1. It is more than probable that the powers of darkness had a great hand in setting before his view the terrors of the wrath of God due to sin, which none are better able to do, than they who are the subjects thereof; and therefore it is observed, in this answer, that he conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness. The devil is sometimes said to have *the power of death*, Heb. ii. 14. that is, if the Spirit of God do not come in with his comforting presence, but Satan be suffered to do what he can to fill the soul with horror, he hath certainly power to make death, beyond measure, terrible. His design herein, with respect to our Saviour, was either to drive him to despair, induce him to repent of his undertaking what he came into the world about, or, at least, to take some indirect methods to decline sufferings. That Satan had some hand in this matter, we may infer from what our Saviour says, when, considering himself as fallen into the hands of his enraged enemies, he tells them, not only that this was *their hour*, that is, the time in which they were suffered to express their rage and malice against him, but that it was the hour of *the power of darkness*, Luke xxii. 53.

2. His death was in itself more terrible than the death of his people, when the sting and bitterness thereof is taken away from them; therefore it is farther observed, in this answer, that he felt and bore the weight of God's wrath, which was the punishment of the sins of his people, for whom he suffered. It was upon this account that he is said *to begin to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy*, to cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*; and to pray, that, *if it were possible*, this part of his sufferings *might pass from him*, Mark xiv. 33—36. We cannot suppose that he was afraid of death; but the wrath of God was what he principally feared. And, since this wrath is, in itself, so terrible, he might well be supposed to be ama-



zed, and exceeding sorrowful, at the view thereof, not for his own sin, but ours, and yet herein not to be guilty of any sin himself.

That this may farther appear, let it be considered, that as he *bore our sins*, 1 Pet. ii. 14. and it *pleased the Lord to bruise him* for them, Isa. liii. 6. so he bore every thing that was a punishment thereof, excepting some circumstances that are peculiar to us, and were inconsistent with his perfect holiness, and the efficacy of his sufferings, to take away the guilt of our sin; and therefore we must suppose that he bore, that is, he had an afflictive sense of the wrath of God due to it. Nothing less than this could occasion him to sweat drops of blood, in his agony, in the garden. Had there been no circumstance in his death, but barely his leaving this miserable world, wherein he had such ill treatment, it would have rendered his stay therein less desirable: but, when he considered those bitter ingredients that were therein, and how he should, when on the cross be forsaken of God, as to his comforting, though not his supporting presence, this made his death more formidable, than the death of any of his people can be said to be. And this leads us to consider the last part of his sufferings; and accordingly it is farther said,

IX. That he endured the shameful, painful, and cursed death of the cross. The pains that he endured before, in being buffeted, scourged, and crowned with thorns, were very great; but what he suffered, when nailed to the cross, and hanging on it till he died, was too great for words to express. His body was, as it were, torn asunder by its own weight, and the small and very sensible nerves and fibres thereof broken, by their violent extension. The apostle therefore speaks of it, as the most cruel death, as appears by the emphasis he puts on the words, *He humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross*, Phil. ii. 8. This death was a punishment peculiar to the Romans, while the empire was Heathen; but when Christianity obtained in the world, it was forbidden by supreme authority, not only because of the barbarity of it, but out of respect and honour to our Saviour, who suffered it.\* And therefore we have only some monuments of antiquity that discover what kind of death it was; but there is enough said of it to give us ground to conclude, that it was the most cruel, painful, and formidable death; wherein the body was fastened to, and extended on a tree, or stake, driven into the ground for that purpose; the arms extended on a transverse beam; the hands and feet fastened, either by ropes or nails. The former of these, as some suppose, was often used in fastening persons to the cross; and, if so, then the nailing our Saviour to it was an instance of

\* Vid. *Sozom. Hist. Eccl. Lib. I. cap. 8.*

unusual cruelty ; but whether this observation be just, or no, is uncertain.

It appears that our Saviour was nailed to the cross, by the mark and print of the nails remaining after his resurrection, which he shewed to Thomas for his conviction, John xx. 27. and this greatly tended to increase the pain of his crucifixion, in which the weight of the whole body depended on the hands and feet, which being nervous, are more sensible of pain, than many other parts thereof ; and, they being wounded with the nails, the pain must be much more exquisite, and this not only for a little while, but for several hours ; all which time he felt the pains of death, and did, as it were, die many deaths in one. This kind of death was so cruel, and so excessively tormenting, that some of the Roman emperors, who were of a more merciful disposition, when persons, for the highest crimes, had deserved it, notwithstanding ordered, that they should first be slain, and then hanged on a cross, to be exposed to shame, or as a terror to others, without suffering those inexpressible tortures, which would attend their dying on it. But our Saviour submitted to all these ; and so willing was he to bear them, that when they offered him a mixture of wine and myrrh, as a narcotic, or stupifying potion, that he might be less sensible of his pain, which was the only kindness they pretended to shew him, and which is, by many, supposed to be customary in such cases, *he received it not* ; which is as though he had said, I contemn all your offered assistances to ease my pain, as much as I do your insults and reproaches ; all my ease and comfort shall be derived from heaven, and not from you. Thus concerning the death of the cross, as exceeding painful.

There is another circumstance observed in this death, namely, that it was shameful. Many think it was styled so, because persons, who suffered it, were stripped of all their garments : but I am inclined to think, that this opinion, though almost universally received, is no better than a vulgar error ; for the Romans, who were a civilized nation, would not admit any thing to be done, which is so contrary to the law of nature, as this thing would have been, had it been done. Besides, there are other circumstances mentioned by the evangelist, Mark xv. 40, 41. which farther argue the improbability thereof.

*Object.* To this it is objected, that the soldiers parted our Saviour's garments, and divided them among themselves, after they had cast lots for his upper garment, or seamless coat, John xix. 23. which they suppose to have been done before his crucifixion.

*Ans.* But to this it may be replied, that it seems more than probable, that only his upper garment, or seamless coat, was taken from him before he was nailed to the cross, and other

garments were not taken till he was dead, and, when he was taken down from it, they were exchanged for those linen garments in which he was buried. This seems evident from the words of the evangelist, who intimates, that his garments were taken off *when they had crucified him*. Therefore the principal reason why the death of Christ is called shameful, as the apostle styles it, when he says, *He despised the shame*, Heb. xii. 2. is because it was a punishment inflicted on none but those who were charged with the vilest crimes, or who were slaves; and therefore it is called a servile punishment.\* When any one was made free of Rome, he was exempted from it; and therefore it was reckoned the highest crime to punish such an one with it, because of the reproach thereof.

It is farther observed, that the death of the cross was a cursed death; upon which account the apostle speaks of Christ, as being *made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is every one that hungeth on a tree*, Gal. iii. 13. For the understanding of which, let it be considered, that to be accursed, sometimes signifies to be abandoned of God and man; but far be it from us to assert this concerning the blessed Jesus, who had done no violence, neither was any deceit found in his mouth. Therefore the meaning of that scripture, as applied to him, is only this, that the death of the cross had a curse annexed to it, and it denotes that the person, who thus suffered, died the death of those who were made a public example, as though they had been abandoned of God. Now though Christ's death had this appearance, yet he was, at the same time, God's beloved Son,

\* *It is frequently styled, by the Romans, Servile supplicium, (Vid. Val. Max. Lib. II. de discipl. milit. § 12.) as being inflicted, by them, on none but slaves; so one (Vid. Ter. Andr.) represents a master speaking to his servant, Quid meritus es? To which he replies, Crucem. & Juvenal in Satyr, 6. says, Pone Crucem servo. Cicero inveighs, with so much earnestness, against this severe and cruel punishment, that he signifies how glorious and delightful a thing it would be for him to declaim against it, not only at the expence of his strength, but of his very life: Quorum ego de acerbissima morte, crudelissimoq; cruciatu dicam, cum eum locum tractare cœpero; & ita dicam, ut si me in ea querimonia, quam sum habiturus de istius crudelitate, & de civium Rom, indignissima morte, non modo vires, verum etiam vita deficiat, id mihi præclarum & jucundum putem. And elsewhere he intimates, that it was universally reckoned the highest crime to crucify any one that was free of Rome, in a beautiful climax, or gradation of expression: Facinus est, vinciri civem Romanum; scelus verberari: prope parricidium necari: quid dicam in crucem tollere? (Vid. Orat. in Verr. Lib. V.) And elsewhere he says, Nomen ipsum crucis, absit non modo a corpore civium Romanorum, sed etiam a cogitatione, oculis, auribus. And he adds concerning it, together with other cruelties that attended it, Harum enim omnium rerum non solum eventus, atque perpassio, sed etiam conditio, expectatio, mentio ipsa denique, indigna cive Romano, atque homine libero est. (Vid. Orat. pro C. Rabir.) As for the cruelty of t's death, it was so great, that the greatest tortures that are expressed by the word Cruciatu, are plainly derived from Cruc: and some of the Roman emperors, who were of a more merciful disposition than others, considering the inhumanity of this kind of death, when they exposed some persons for their crimes to public shame upon the cross, ordered them first to be put to death by the sword.*



in whom he was well pleased, how much soever he bore the external marks of God's wrath, or abhorrence of our sins, for which he suffered. The scripture which the apostle refers to, is in Deut. xxi. 22, 23. from whence we may take occasion to observe, that, after the Jews had put persons to death for notorious crimes, they sometimes hanged them on a tree, and such were deemed accursed.

The common punishments, which were ordained, in scripture, to be inflicted on malefactors, were burning, slaying with the sword, or stoning; and when persons were hanged up before the Lord, that they might be a public spectacle to others, it was done after they were slain: thus it is said, that Joshua smote the five kings, and slew them, and then hanged them on five trees until the evening, Josh. x. 26. so David slew the two men that murdered Ishbosheth, and then hanged them over the pool in Heshbon, 2 Sam. iv. 12. and, inasmuch as these are said to be hanged before the Lord, it was a significant sign of God's righteous judgment inflicted on them for their crimes, upon which account they were said to be cursed: but our Saviour was not liable to the curse of God, as one who had committed any crime that deserved it; but it had respect to the kind of death which he endured for our sins, who were thereby exposed to the curse, or condemning sentence of the law. Thus concerning Christ's humiliation in his death.

We are now to consider his humiliation after his death. Though the greatest part of his humiliation was finished when he yielded up the ghost, yet his state of humiliation was not fully ended till he rose from the dead; therefore it is observed in the latter of these answers we are now explaining, that he was buried, and continued under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, *He descended into hell*, as it is contained in that Creed, which is commonly attributed to the apostles. Here we may observe,

1. That Christ was buried. Before this, while he hanged on the cross, he had, as it was before observed, the visible mark of the curse of God upon him, without any desert of his own; and this he was delivered from, when he was taken down from thence. It was a custom, among the Romans, to suffer the bodies of those that were crucified to hang on the cross till they were devoured by wild beasts, or fowls of the air, or turned to corruption, unless they were given to their relations to be buried, as an act of favour: but, in this instance, we may observe, that Christ's implacable enemies desired that his body might be taken down soon after he was dead; not out of respect to him, but for fear the land should be defiled, as God had ordained in the law, that *if a person were hanged on a tree, his body should not remain all night upon it, but must be buried, lest the land*

*should be defiled*, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. and they were the more importunate that he should be taken down, because of the sanctity of the approaching day, John xix. 31. They petitioned Pilate for it with one view, and Joseph of Arimathea, ver. 38. with another; he begged the body that he might bury it.

Here we may observe, that, after the Jews had done their worst against him, and he was taken from the cross, there was a becoming honour and respect shewed to his sacred Body; and herein that scripture was fulfilled, *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death*, Isa. liii. 9. which words, indeed, seem to have some difficulty in them, as they are thus translated; for, though he was crucified with the wicked, it can hardly be said that he made his grave with them; and therefore I would chuse to render them, as some expositors do,\* *His grave was appointed*, viz. by his persecutors, to have been *with the wicked*, that is, they designed to have thrown him into the common grave of malefactors, who had no marks of respect shewn them: but it was otherwise with Christ, for *he made his grave with the rich*, that is, he was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich and honourable counsellor, where he himself designed to lie, which he had thrown out of the rock for that purpose. This honour, as the prophet observes, was conferred on our Saviour, *because he had done no violence; neither was deceit found in his mouth*.

There were several reasons why God ordained that he should be buried, and that in such a way and place, as he was; for,

(1.) His burial was a convincing proof to the world that he was really dead; so much depended upon his death, that it was thought necessary that there should be an abundant evidence thereof. It is, indeed, expressly said, that *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*, John xix. 30. and his enemies were convinced thereof, and therefore thought it needless to break his legs, as they did those of the thieves, who were crucified with him; providence ordering this, that *that scripture should be fulfilled*, which fore-signified, that *a bone of him should not be broken*. But, besides this, that there might be a farther proof that he was really dead, it is said, that, even when they knew it, they *pierced his side*, which, of itself, would have killed him, had he not been dead: this they did, that they might be sure he was dead, before they took him down from the cross, chap. xix. 33, 34. And it is farther observed, that Pilate, his unjust judge, was resolved to be satisfied that he was really dead, before he gave orders for his being taken down from the cross: thus it is said, that Pilate *marvelled if he were already dead; and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead?* Mark xv. 44. It may be, the reason

\* See Lowth in loc.

why they were so inquisitive to know whether he were really dead, or no, was because he seemed to die in his full strength; for there is something remarkable in that expression, when the evangelist says, *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost*, ver. 37. whereby it appeared, that his spirits were not so much exhausted, but that he might, according to the course of nature, have lived longer; but he seemed by an act of his own will, to surrender his soul to God. This was so remarkable an occurrence, that it was not merely by accident that it is mentioned by the evangelist; and, indeed, it was the means of the centurion's conviction that he was the Son of God, ver. 39.

(2.) Providence ordered that he should be buried by persons of reputation and honour, that so the world might know, that how much soever the rude multitude despised him, persons of figure and character in the world paid a due respect to him, John xix. 39, 40.

(3.) It was farther ordained, that he should be buried in a new tomb, wherein never man was laid; that so his resurrection might be more fully demonstrated, that none might pretend that another was raised instead of him, since no other was buried in this grave.

The fine linen, in which his body was wrapped, and the sweet spices, or perfumed ointment, with which it was embalmed, was not only agreeable to the method of sepulture, used by the Jews, but it was a public testimony of that respect which his friends bore to him, to whom his memory was precious: so that Nicodemus, who, before this, was afraid to come publickly to him, or who, as it is said, at the first, came to Jesus by night, *brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury*, chap. xix. 30, 40.

2. As Christ died, and was buried, so he continued under the power of death till the third day; this the apostle calls, *Death's having dominion over him*, Rom. vi. 9. and it must be reckoned a part of his humiliation, as well as the act of dying; for,

1st, Though his soul enjoyed the bliss and happiness of heaven, immediately after his death, as he tells the penitent thief, that *that day he should be with him in paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. yet, inasmuch as it was, when separate, in a state of imperfection, and had a natural desire, and hope of re-union with the body, this argues that there were some degrees of perfect blessedness, that it was not then possessed of.

2dly, So long as he continued under the power of death, he was not fully discharged by the justice of God; neither was the work of satisfaction complete, till he was declared to be the Son of God with power, and to have fully conquered death and



hell, by his resurrection from the death; this was therefore a part of his humiliation.

3dly, His body, while remaining a prisoner in the grave, could not actively bring that glory to God, which it did before, or would do after its resurrection; and it was, at that time, incapable of the heavenly blessedness, and, in particular, of its being so glorious a body, as now it is.

All these things attending the state of separate souls, or the unseen state, into which Christ is said to go, immediately after his death, some call, as it is observed in this answer, his descent into hell, which is what we are next to consider: but, since this is largely and judiciously handled by several writers,\* I shall insist on it with brevity. And,

[1.] Consider it as founded on scripture, as the judicious Calvin does,† without regard had to its being inserted in any creed of human composure: thus it is said, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*, Acts ii. 27. where it seems, as the author but now mentioned observes, to be put before his death; and therefore he supposes, that the apostle hereby intends the sufferings which our Saviour endured in his soul, which were not, in all respects, unlike the punishment due to sin in hell: and herein he is followed by several modern writers; and the principal reason, which they assign for it, is, because, as our Surety, he endured all the essential parts of that punishment, which our sins had deserved; and therefore they suppose, that he endured an afflictive sensation of the wrath of God, which bore some resemblance to that which is endured in hell.

But, though I would not extenuate Christ's sufferings, especially in that part thereof, that was most formidable to him, which was the cup that he desired, if it were possible, that it might pass from him; nor can we suppose that any thing less than a view which he had of the wrath of God, due to our sins, would fill him with that horror and amazement, which he expressed: yet we ought carefully to distinguish between this part of his sufferings, and the punishment of sin in hell, inasmuch as he was exempted from the sting of conscience, and a constant sense of the everlasting displeasure of God, together with despair of any better condition, or the least relaxation, as a judicious writer observes.‡ And besides, it is expressly said, in this scripture, *Thou wilt not leave my soul*; which shews, that though he might be destitute of the comfortable sense of God's presence, which occasioned him to cry out, *My God, my God*,

\* Vid. Wits. in *Symbol. Exercitat.* 18. and *Pearson on the Creed.* Article 5. and *Parker de descensu Christi ad inferos.*

† Vid. *Institut. Lib. II. cap. 16. § 10.*

‡ Vid. *Pearson on the Creed.* Artic. 5.

*why hast thou forsaken me?* yet he was not destitute of the supporting presence of God, nor separate from his love, which always redounded to his Person; though the effects of God's wrath, which he bore, might fill him with the greatest uneasiness, from the afflictive view, which he had thereof in his soul. However, though the sense of this text must be thus qualified, if we suppose that it denotes Christ's sufferings in his soul before his death; yet it does not sufficiently appear that the apostle speaks of his sufferings antecedent to it; because it is brought in as an argument, to prove that he should be raised from the dead, and accordingly his flesh is said to rest in hope; therefore we shall proceed,

[2.] To consider Christ's descent into hell, as contained in one of the articles of the creed, that is commonly attributed to the apostles, which is particularly referred to, in the answer under our present consideration, wherein it is put after his death. Here something might have been premised concerning that Creed in general, and the reason of inserting this article in it: but this having been insisted on with great judgment by others,\* all that I shall add, is, that notwithstanding what we meet with in some fabulous and spurious writings, this Creed was not compiled by the apostles, how consonant soever it be to the doctrines laid down by them: for we have no account given of it by any ancient writers before the fourth century, therefore it is of later date, than either the Nicene or Athanasian Creed; the former of which was composed about the year of our Lord 325, the latter not long after it. In the Nicene Creed, there is no mention made of Christ's descent into hell, though the Athanasian Creed inserts it; but there is no mention therein of his being buried. The words are these: He descended into hell, and the third day he arose from the dead; from whence some conclude, that nothing else is intended but his being buried, or continuing in the state of the dead, till his resurrection. (a) Some think, indeed, that there was a marginal note in some copies of this Creed, to explain what is meant

\* *Vid. History of the apostles Creed.*

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(a) The Creed called the Apostles' is not offered by the first writers in whom it is found, upon its own authority. They attempt to prove it from the scriptures, and we can receive it in no other way. The article "He descended into hell" did not originally stand in the Eastern, nor in the Roman creed; it was first found in the creed of Aquileia, which had nothing of Christ's burial; and no doubt as *ad huc* is often put for the grave, this article meant in it his burial. When inserted from thence into the two other creeds, which mentioned his burial already, it was understood of his human soul. Yet it stands incoherently, for his body was crucified, dead, buried, arose, and was seen to ascend: but this article, in the midst of those verbs, predicates something of another subject, his soul. Yet if taken in the sense of "*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,*" (Psa. xvi. Acts ii.) it is true. But *hinc* and *ad huc* are each taken for the invisible world or sepa-

by his descending into hell, namely, that he was buried ; which the compilers of the apostles Creed afterwards thought to be a part of the Creed itself, and therefore they add, that he died, was buried, and descended into hell. But passing by this critical remark, concerning the reason of the insertion hereof in this article, we shall proceed to consider how this is explained, by various writers, who treat on this subject. And,

(1.) The Papists and Lutherans assert that our Saviour descended locally into hell after his death ; not to suffer any of the torments that are endured there, but to shew himself as a conqueror over those who are detained in it, and triumph over them. As for the Papists, they suppose, that he went also into a place, which they describe \* as a prison, where the souls of the old Testament-saints were detained, as being incapable of entering into heaven, inasmuch as they had not a sufficient discovery of Christ and the gospel made to them, while they were here on earth ; and therefore they were detained in this, which we may call a fictitious place, which they represent as being between heaven and hell ; not, indeed, according to them, a place of torment, but they suppose it was such, in which they were destitute of the heavenly blessedness ; and they add, that immediately after Christ appeared among them, and manifested himself to them, they believed ; in which sense they understand that scripture, where it is said, that *the gospel was preached to them that are dead*, 1 Pet. iv. 6. and, upon this, he carried them with him into heaven. This opinion of Christ's descending locally into hell, is very absurd, and contrary to scripture ; particularly,

1st, To what he says to the penitent thief upon the cross, *To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise*, Luke xxiii. 43. by which, doubtless he means heaven, which is called paradise in other scriptures, 2 Cor. xii. 2. compared with 4. and Rev. ii. 7.

\* *This they call Limbus Patrum.*

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rate state, of the good, as well as evil, both in the old and new Testament, and this was thought by Jews and Gentiles to be under the surface. Thus Abraham and Lazarus were supposed there, and Samuel to have been called up from thence. Christ asserting his divinity, must allege he came from heaven, for that was the place of God. He also returned thither, and is to come from thence ; yet he has gone to prepare a place, and his disciples expected by his promise to be with him, and so all other Christians. His descent therefore means that his soul, when separated from his body, was immediately with the separate spirits, who are happy, and so said to be in paradise. But whether above, or below the surface, is unimportant. None but the Divine Spirit is ubiquitary, but the transitions of others may be as quick as thought. They have means of communication with each other, and can receive what answers to our sense of light, without bodily senses, and no doubt vastly more satisfactorily, than we do in our most vivid dreams. The Divine Nature of Christ was, and is, omnipresent ; for he declared he was in heaven whilst on earth, and it is not probable that his human soul was separated from this after his death any more than during his life.



The method which the Papists take to evade the force of this argument, is, by pretending that our Saviour speaks of his being with him in heaven, as he is there in his divine nature ; or, since that appears to be so great a strain on the sense of the text, that very few will much regard it ; they have another evasion, which is as little to the purpose, by pretending, that there ought to be a stop put after the words to day ; and so the meaning is, that now at this time, I say unto thee, that thou shalt be with me in paradise, or heaven, when I ascend into it, after I have descended into hell, and that other place which I must go to, before I come to heaven : but this sense of the text is so evasive, that none, who read the scripture impartially, can suppose that it is just ; and therefore nothing farther need be said to it.

2dly, It appears that Christ immediately went into heaven, as to his soul, when he died upon the cross, from his last words, *Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit ; which having said, he gave up the ghost*, Luke xxiii. 46. This giving up himself to God, implies a desire that God would receive his spirit ; even as Stephen said, with his dying breath, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*, Acts vii. 59. Christ, in effect, desires that God would receive his spirit ; and can we suppose this prayer to be unanswered, or that he was not immediately received into heaven ?

We might farther have shown how little ground they have to conclude that Christ went to preach the gospel to those, who, by reason of the darkness of the Old Testament-dispensation, were detained in prison, as being unfit for the heavenly state : but the falseness of this supposition has been considered elsewhere,\* and therefore pass it over at present. And as for that scripture, which they bring in defence hereof, that Christ went and preached to the spirits in prison, 1 Pet. iii. 19. it is plain from the context, that the apostle means nothing else thereby, but his sending Noah to preach to the old world, who were disobedient, and, for this, were sent into the prison of hell, *after the long-suffering of God had waited on them while the ark was building*. How easy a matter is it for those, who regard but the analogy of faith, or the context of those scriptures, which they bring in defence of their wild absurdities, to pretend to prove any thing from scripture ! (a)

\* See Vol. I. page 54, 55, and page 209, ante.

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(a) 1 Peter iii. 18. describes the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, as encouragement for the suffering saints. There are no prepositions before *σάρκι*, and *πνεύματι* (flesh and spirit :) our translators have taken the former as the dative of the *part affected*, the latter as the dative of the *cause* ; and have expressed the former by *in*, the latter by *by*. Some preposition, or prepositions must be inserted in the translation. It is said, to preserve the antithesis, the same should

As to what they say concerning Christ's descending into hell, to triumph over the devils, and others, who were there plunged into that abyss of misery, this conjecture has no foundation in scripture. We read, indeed of his *spoiling principalities and powers, and making a shew of them openly, triumphing over them*; but it was in his cross, and not in hell, Col. ii. 15. and elsewhere of his *destroying him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*, Heb. ii. 14. But it was not by going in his own Person into that place, where he is detained in chains of darkness; it was not by any thing done by him after his death, but, as it is expressed, by death, as he purchased that victory, which he obtained over him on the cross, which was the seat of his triumph in this respect; and therefore there is no foundation to assert his local descent into hell.

(2.) The most probable opinion concerning Christ's descent into hell, which I cannot but acquiesce in, is what is observed in this answer, as implying his continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day. The word *hell*, indeed, in our English tongue, generally, if not always, signifies that place of torment, which they are adjudged to, who are for ever excluded from the divine favour: thus it is said, concerning the rich man in the parable, that *in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments*, Luke xvi. 23. But the He-

be repeated, and so it will be; "Was quickened in the Spirit," which will refer to his human soul. But his human soul was not dead, and could not be quickened. And it is absurd to substitute the adjective *quick*, (as Dr. Horsley has done) for this is to make, not translate scripture. Nor could his human soul quicken his body; it was the power of God, whether we understand by Spirit his divine nature, the person of the Father, or of the Holy Spirit. Now as the word Spirit here cannot mean his human soul, this passage will not prove that it went to any place, or prison, whatever.

By which, (ver. 19.) relates to the Divine Spirit: *he*, that is, Christ, *went* (*προσηλθὼν* having gone,) *preached* (this is also the indefinite past tense) *to the spirits in prison*. The omission of the substantive verb makes the present tense; and the spirits here spoken of were still in prison, at the time of the writing this epistle, and therefore whether good or evil, they had not been set at large by Christ from their imprisonment. The word *disobedient* is also the indefinite participle. *Went, preached, and disobedient*, are all the same tense; and, coming together, evidently relate to the same time. *And* connects them with, and pin them down to the time of the verb *waited*, which is the unfinished action, *was waiting*, the tense, which is most definite, and in this case actually connected with absolute time, to wit, "in the days of Noah." The *going forth*, the *preaching*, and the *disobedience*, were therefore all, as well as the *waiting* of God, in the days of Noah, and not between the death, and resurrection of Christ.

The reason that the Apostle fixes on the fearful example of rejecting divine instructions in the days of Noah, was probably that Noah had been called in scripture a *preacher of righteousness*: the Lord had also said of that generation, that his Spirit should not always strive with man, which implies, that his Spirit did go forth with the preaching of that age; and their disobedience was proved by their destruction by the deluge; and their death in impenitency was a proof of their everlasting punishment.

brew and Greek words,\* which we often translate *hell*, have not only that, but another sense affixed to them, as they sometimes signify the *grave*; so our translators frequently render the word; as when Jacob speaks of *bringing down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*, Gen. xlii. 38. and elsewhere it is said, *The Lord killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to grave, and bringeth up*, 1 Sam. ii. 6. And it is taken for the state of the dead: thus Jacob, when he thought that his son Joseph was torn in pieces, without being laid in the grave, says, *I will go down into the grave, unto my son*, Gen. xxxvii. 35. There are many other places in which the Hebrew word is so rendered; and as for the Greek word, that, according to its proper derivation and signification, denotes the state of the dead, or the unseen state: thus our Saviour, after death, continued in the state of the dead, his soul being separate from his body till the third day, when his state of humiliation was finished.

This leads us to consider Christ's state of exaltation.

QUEST. LI. *What was the estate of Christ's exaltation?*

ANSW. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

QUEST. LII. *How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?*

ANSW. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, of which it was not possible for him to be held, and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, but without mortality and other common infirmities belonging to this life, really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day, by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be Lord of quick and dead; all which he did as a public Person, the Head of his church, for their justification, quickning in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

**T**HE former of these answers containing only a general account of what is particularly insisted on in some following answers, we pass it over, and proceed to consider Christ as exalted in his resurrection. And accordingly we may observe,

I. That he did not see corruption in death. Corruption according to our common acceptation of the words imports two things,

\* *ἔσθω and ἄδω.*



1. The dissolution of the frame of nature, or the separation of soul and body, in which sense every one that dies sees corruption; for death is the dissolution, or separation of the two constituent parts of man; which therefore the apostle calls *the dissolution of this earthly tabernacle*, 2 Cor. v. 1. Now when our Saviour is said not to see corruption, it is not to be understood in this sense; because he really died.

2. It consists principally in the body's being putrified, or turned into dust. In this sense it is said, *Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*, Acts ii. 27. which is explained in a following verse, in which is said, that *his flesh did not see corruption*, ver. 31. i. e. he did not continue long enough in the state of the dead, for his body to be corrupted, which it would have been, without a continued miracle, had it lain many days in the grave.

If it be objected, that to lie two or three days in the grave is sufficient to contract some degree of corruption; therefore Christ's body could not, in all respects, be free from corruption.

To this we answer, that there was a peculiar hand of providence, in keeping it from being corrupted, during that short space of time, in which it continued in the state of the dead, which was an indication of the great regard which God had to him, his sufferings therein being now at an end. But there may be another reason hereof assigned, inasmuch as the filth of sin is sometimes illustrated by things putrified and corrupted, to beget in us a detestation thereof; therefore God would not suffer the body of Christ to be corrupted; as his soul had not the least taint of moral corruption in life, it was not expedient that his body should have the least mark or emblem of it in death. And it was also necessary, that his body should not see corruption, by being turned into dust, as the bodies of all men will be; otherwise we could not have had so evident a proof, that the same body which died, was raised again from the dead, which will be farther insisted on, under a following head, when we consider the reason why he rose again so soon as the third day.

II. It was not possible for our Saviour to be held any longer under the power of death: this is taken from Acts ii. 24. For the understanding whereof, let us consider,

1. That had he continued always under the power of death, it would have argued the insufficiency of his satisfaction, so that his obedience in life, and his sufferings in death, could not have attained the end designed thereby; and consequently the infinite worth and value thereof would, in effect, have been denied. Therefore the justice of God being fully satisfied, it could not refuse to release him out of prison, that is, to raise him from the dead.

2. It was not possible that he should be held any longer under the power of death, than till the third day, because the purpose and promise of God must have its accomplishment. And, indeed, he was given to understand, before he suffered, that his body should be detained no longer in the grave; as he intimates to his followers, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, John ii. 19. This event, therefore, was proposed as a sign, and an appeal is made thereunto, for the confirmation of his mission and doctrine; therefore it was impossible that he should be held any longer in the grave.

III. We are to prove, that Christ actually rose again from the dead. The two main proofs, necessary to support our faith herein, are, 1. A sufficient testimony given hereof by creatures, 2. A farther confirmation of it by miracles, which are a divine testimony. Both these we have; and it may be farther observed, that the great ends of his death and resurrection are fully obtained, as appears by daily experience; all which afforded us unquestionable matter of conviction.

*First*, As to the former sort of testimony. It was attested by sufficient, undeniable evidence; as,

1. By two angels, who were sent from heaven, as the first witnesses thereof; they are described as being *in shining garments, who said, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen*, Luke xxiv. 4—6. They are called indeed, *two men*, because they appeared in human form; but another evangelist calls them *two angels*, John xx. 12.

2. It was attested, by several men and women, who were his familiar friends and followers before his death, and saw and conversed with him, after his resurrection, and therefore had sufficient proof that it was he who suffered that was raised from the dead. And, lest the testimony of his apostles should not be reckoned sufficient, though there were enough of them to attest this matter, he was afterwards seen by a great number, namely, *Above five hundred brethren at once*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. and surely, all these could not be deceived, in a matter of which it was necessary for themselves, as well as others, that they should have the fullest conviction.

Now that it was morally impossible, that his disciples, in particular, should be imposed on, will farther appear, if we consider,

(1.) That they were his intimate associates; it was for this reason, among others, that providence ordered that he should appear to, and converse mostly with them: had he appeared to others, who never knew him before, and told them that he was risen from the dead, though they could not question his being alive, whilst they conversed with him; yet they might doubt whether he was the same person who died, and so was

raised from the dead : and it cannot well be conceived that such could receive a full conviction, as to this matter, without a miracle : but, when he appeared to those who were intimately acquainted with him, before his death, the conviction is easy and natural ; for,

If his countenance, or outward appearance, as much resembled what it was before his death, as ours after a fit of sickness does what it was before ; then his aspect, or external appearance to them, would afford such matter of conviction, as very few pretend to gainsay ; especially, considering it was but three days since they saw him, before he was crucified. But it may be objected to this, that his countenance was so altered, that it was hard to know him by it, insomuch that Mary, one of his intimate acquaintance, when she first saw him, mistook him for the gardener, John xx. 14, 15. and it is said, that, *after this he appeared in another form unto two of them*, Mark xvi. 12.

As to the former of these scriptures, Mary might easily mistake him for another person, through surprize, and not looking stedfastly on him, as not expecting to see him. This her mistake, therefore, may easily be accounted for, though we suppose his countenance not much to differ from what it was before his death.

As to the other scripture, which speaks of his appearing, *in another form*, to two of his disciples, as they walked into the country ; this is mentioned, with some particular enlargement, by the evangelist Luke, together with the conversation our Saviour had with them ; and it is observed, that *their eyes were holden, that they should not know him*, Luke xxiv. 16. and that afterwards *their eyes were opened and they knew him*, ver. 31. May we not, from hence, suppose, that there was something preternatural, either in the change of Christ's countenance, to the end that, at first, they should not know him ; or else, that there was some impress upon the minds of the disciples, that prevented their knowing him ? If the former of these be supposed, as agreeable to St. Mark's words, relating to his appearing in *another form* ; this miracle will not give sufficient occasion for us to conclude that our Saviour's countenance was so much altered, when, in other instances, he appeared to his disciples, that it was impossible that they should know him thereby : but, if this should be allowed ; or, if it should be objected, that the most intimate friends may mistake the person whom they see, if there be nothing else to judge by, but the likeness of his countenance, to what it was before ; then let us add,

(2.) That our Saviour not only appeared to his disciples, but conversed with them, and brought to their remembrance what had passed between him and them before his death : thus he



says, *These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you*, &c. Luke xxiv. 44. Now, when a person not only discovers himself to others, but brings to mind private conversation that had before passed between them, at particular times and places; this leaves no ground to doubt whether it be the same person, or no. Therefore his appearing to, and conversing with his intimate, particular friends, and calling to mind former conversation held with them before his death, proves that he was the same Person that had lived before; and consequently they might be as sure that he was raised from the dead, as they were that he died.

3. Those persons, who, after his resurrection, were witnesses to the truth hereof to the world, were very worthy of credit; for,

(1.) They were of such a temper, that they would believe nothing themselves, but upon the fullest evidence; and this they had to such an extreme, as is uncommon; providence so ordering it, that we might, from thence, be more sure that we were not imposed on by their report. They were incredulous, even to a fault; for,

1st, Though they had sufficient intimation given them, that our Saviour would rise from the dead, at that time that he really did, and were also credibly informed by the women, who had an account hereof from the angel, that he was risen; yet it is said, *Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not*, chap. xxiv. 11.

2dly, After they had received a farther account of this matter, from those two disciples, who conversed with him, going to Emmaus, and therefore had sufficient ground, from them, to conclude that he was risen from the dead; yet, when our Saviour, at the same time that they were reporting this matter to them, appeared in the midst of them, *they were terrified*, as if they had *seen a spirit*, Luke xxiv. 36, 37. This farther discovers how much they were disinclined to believe any thing, without greater evidence than what is generally demanded in like cases.

3dly, The report given by the rest of the disciples to Thomas, concerning his resurrection, and his having appeared to them, and conversed with them, which was a sufficient ground to induce any one to believe it, was not, in the least regarded by him, who determined, that unless *he saw in his hands the print of the nails, and put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side, he would not believe*; in which he was afterwards indulged by our Saviour for his conviction. All these things are plain proofs that the disciples, who were to be witnesses of this matter, were not persons of such a temper, as that they might easily be imposed on, and therefore their report is more convincing to us.

(2.) They were men of an unspotted character, unblemished honesty and integrity, which is a very necessary circumstance to be regarded, in those who are evidences to any matters of fact: their conversation was subject to the inspection of their most inveterate enemies, who, if they could have found any thing blame-worthy therein, would, doubtless, have alleged it against them, as an expedient to have brought their persons and doctrines into disrepute, which would have had a tendency to sap the very foundation of the Christian religion; and the Jews need not have had recourse to persecution, or called in the aid of the civil magistrate to silence them, if they could have produced any instances of dishonesty, or want of integrity, in their character. The apostle Peter, who was one of the witnesses to this truth, appeals to the world in the behalf of himself and the rest of the apostles, when he says, *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty*, 2 Pet. i. 18. and, indeed, their writings discover not only great integrity, but holiness, and therefore the same apostle styles them all, *Holy men of God*, ver. 21.

(3.) They could not be supposed to have the least prospect of advantage by deceiving the world, as to this matter; but, on the other hand, were to look for nothing else but the greatest degree of opposition, both from the Jews and the Heathen. The former, who had always been such enemies to their Lord and Master, would, doubtless, be so to them; and, besides this, they reckoned it their interest to oppose and persecute every one who propagated this doctrine, inasmuch as they apprehended, that, if the world believed it, it would fasten an eternal mark of infamy upon them; and they were also apprehensive, that it would *bring on them* the guilt of *his blood*, that is, the deserved punishment thereof, Acts v. 28. If any one should object, that they might have some view to their own interest, when they first became Christ's disciples, or expect some secular advantage, by being the subjects of his kingdom, as apprehending that it was of a temporal nature; this they had not any ground for from him. Besides, since his crucifixion, all expectations of that kind were at an end; and therefore their reporting that he was risen from the dead, if he had not been so, would have been to invent a lie, contrary to their own interest.

Moreover, they would herein not only have imposed on others, but have incurred the divine displeasure, and ruined their own souls, the happiness whereof was equally concerned in the truth of their testimony with that of ours; and none can suppose that they ever appeared so desperate, as not to regard what became of them, either in this or another world.

Thus we have considered the testimony of those apostles, who saw and conversed with Christ after his resurrection, together with their respective character, as witnesses hereof. And to them we have the addition of another witness to this truth, namely, the apostle Paul, who saw him in an extraordinary manner, after his ascension into heaven, and heard his voice, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest*, chap. xxvi. 14—16. upon this occasion he says, concerning himself, *Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time*, 1 Cor. xv. 8. that is, one who had this qualification for the apostleship, or his being a witness to Christ's resurrection, after that time, in which others were qualified to bear their testimony hereunto, that is, after his ascension into heaven. And we may observe, concerning this witness, that he was well known, by all the Jews, to have been one of the most inveterate enemies to Christianity in the world; which he frequently afterwards took occasion to mention, that so his testimony might be more regarded; and, indeed, nothing short of the fullest evidence, as to this matter, could induce him to forego his secular interest, and in common with the rest of the apostles, to expose himself to the loss of all things, in defence of this truth.

And, now we are speaking concerning the witnesses to Christ's resurrection, and the apostle Paul, as attesting this, from his having seen him in glorified state, we may take notice of one more evidence hereunto, namely, the blessed martyr Stephen, who declared, in the presence of his enraged enemies, *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God*, Acts vii. 56. He was, doubtless, one of the holiest, and most upright men in his day; and, when he gave this testimony, it is said, in the foregoing words, *He was full of the Holy Ghost*; and certainly the Holy Ghost, would not suggest a falsity to him: and this he spake when ready to expire, and, at such a time, men are under no temptation to deceive the world; so that if, at any time, they are to be believed, it is then, when they are in the most serious frame, and thoughtful about the world into which they are immediately passing. Thus concerning the testimony of Christ's friends and followers to his resurrection.

And, to this, we might add the testimony of enemies themselves hereunto; they were forced to own this truth, though it was so much against their own interest, and made their crime, in crucifying him appear so black and heinous. Thus we may observe, that when Christ was buried, the Jews desired Pilate, from the intimation which they before had received, that he was to rise again after three days, that his sepulchre should be made sure till that time, which was done accordingly; a stone



rolled to the mouth thereof, and sealed, and a watch appointed to guard it; and these were Jews, as Pilate says, *Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can*, Matt. xxvii. 65. He did not order Christ's friends and followers to watch the sepulchre, but his enemies; and it is observed, concerning them, that when the stone was rolled from the door of the sepulchre, by the ministry of an angel, *the keepers*, or the watch which Pilate had set, *did shake and became as dead men*, chap. xxviii. 4. or were ready to die with fear. This could not throw them into a sleep, for fear awakens, rather than stupifies the passions; upon this it is said, *Some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests the things that were done; and when they had assembled together, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away, while we slept; and, since this would render them liable to the governor's resentment, and some degree of punishment for their not attending their respective post, with that watchfulness that was necessary, they add, We will persuade him and secure you; upon which it is said, They took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.* This is the most stupid and absurd method that could be taken, to discountenance the doctrine of Christ's resurrection; and, indeed it contains a proof thereof: the soldiers, at first, reported matter of fact; but the evasion thereof confutes itself. Must we not suppose, that there were a considerable number that watched the sepulchre? Doubtless, they would take care to have several there present, lest those who might come to steal him away should be too strong for them: and, if there were several of them present, could they be all asleep at the same time? and could the tomb be opened, which they had made stronger than ordinary, and the stone rolled from it, and yet none of them be awakened out of their sleep? Besides, if they were asleep, their evidence, that Christ was, at the same time, stolen away by his disciples, is too ridiculous to be regarded by any, who consider what sort of evidence deserves to be credited; for how could they know what was done when they were asleep? Thus concerning the testimony given to Christ's resurrection, both by angels and men. We proceed to consider,

*Secondly*, How it was confirmed by miracles, which are no other than a divine testimony. The former sort of evidence, indeed, is sufficient to convince any one, who does not give way to the greatest degree of scepticism: but yet we have farther proof of it; for, as the apostle says, *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, 1 John v. 19. Now God himself has been pleased to set his seal to this truth, or to con-

firm it by the extraordinary testimony of miracles, which were wrought by the apostles ; which was, in some respect, necessary, that the faith of those, who were to be convinced thereby, might be properly divine, and therefore founded on greater evidence than that of human testimony, how undeniable soever it were : thus it is said, that *with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus*, Acts iv. 33. and the Holy Ghost, in particular, by whose immediate efficiency these miracles were wrought, is said to be a witness hereunto : thus the apostles say, *We are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him*, chap. v. 32. the meaning of which is, we are speaking and acting by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, confirming to you this great truth. And, indeed, those miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost were an extraordinary means for the conviction of the world concerning this truth ; which our Saviour gave his followers ground to expect, at this time, before his death, when he spake concerning the Spirit, which was not before given, John vii. 36. that is, not in so great a degree, so as to enable them to speak with divers tongues, and work various sorts of miracles, beyond what they had done before ; accordingly it is said, *The Holy Ghost was not yet, or before this, given, because that Jesus was not glorified*. This Christ also promised them, immediately before his ascension into heaven, that *these signs shall follow them that believe ; in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and, if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands, and they shall recover*, Mark xvi. 17, 18. These miracles are called signs, as ordained to signify or give a proof of Christ's resurrection ; and they are said to be wrought by them, who had the faith of miracles, believed it themselves, and hereby induced others to believe it ; and also they wrought them in his name, with a design to set forth his glory, which could not have been evinced hereby, had he not been risen from the dead.

And to this we may add, that all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which believers are made partakers of, are convincing evidences of this doctrine. But this will be considered under a following head, when we speak to the latter part of this answer, respecting the fruits and consequences of Christ's resurrection, which the church, in all the ages, thereof, experiences, whereby the work of grace is begun, carried on, and perfected in them ; which leads us to consider,

IV. The properties of the body of Christ, as thus raised from the dead, as it is said, in this answer, that the same body was raised again, with all the essential properties thereof, but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life.

1. It was the same body which suffered that was raised from the dead, otherwise it could not be called a resurrection: thus the apostle Paul, speaking concerning the general resurrection at the last day, compares it to the springing up of seed, 1 Cor. xv. 37, 38. that is sown in the ground, which, though it be very much altered, as to its shape, and many accidental properties, yet it is the same for substance that was sown; accordingly, every seed hath its own body; the matter is the same, though the form be different.

2. When it is said, that the body of Christ had the same essential properties which it had before his death, we are to understand hereby, that it was material, and endowed with the same senses that it had before, which were exercised in the same manner, though it may be, in a greater degree.

3. It is farther observed, that it had not the same accidental properties which belonged to it before; for it was without mortality, and other infirmities of this life; thus the apostle speaks, concerning the resurrection of all believers to this purpose, *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body*, ver. 42—44. and it is said in particular, concerning our Saviour, that, *being raised from the dead, he dieth no more*, Rom. vi. 9. that is, he was raised immortal. And as believers, after their resurrection from the dead, shall be delivered from the common infirmities of life, such as hunger, thirst, pain, sickness, and the like; much more may we conclude that our Saviour was so: but how far his human nature was changed as to all the properties thereof, it is not for us to pretend to determine, nor ought we to be too inquisitive about it; nevertheless, we may conclude, that though it was raised incorruptible and immortal, and exempted from the common infirmities of this life; yet it was not, while here on earth, clothed with that lustre and glory which was put upon it, when he ascended into heaven; the reason of which might probably be this, that he might converse with men, or that they might be able to bear his presence, which they could not have done, had his body been so glorious, as it is now at present, since his ascension into heaven.

V. It is farther observed, that Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, that is, he continued in the state of the dead, from the evening of the sixth day, to the morning of the first, which is the Christian Sabbath: thus the day on which Christ died is said to be the *preparation, and the Sabbath drew on*, Luke xxiii. 54. which another Evangelist explains, and says, *It was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath*, Mark xv. 42. The reason why the day before the Sabbath is so call-



ed, is, because it was the day wherein they prepared every thing that was necessary for the solemnity of the day following, and gave a dispatch to their worldly affairs, that they might not be embarrassed therewith, and that by fore-thought and meditation on the work of that day, they might be better prepared. This was on the sixth day of the week, and Christ died in the evening, not long before sun-set; and it is also said, that he rose again from the dead when the seventh day was past, very early in the morning on the first day of the week, chap. xvi. 1, 2. so that our Saviour continued in the state of the dead a part of the sixth, the whole seventh, and a part of the first day of the week; upon which account he is said to rise again on the third day, 1 Cor. xv. 4. that is, the third day, inclusive of the day of his death, and that of his resurrection. The learned bishop Pearson, in his marginal notes on the fifth article of the Creed, illustrates it by a tertian, or third-day ague, which is so called, though there be but one day's intermission between the paroxisms thereof, and so the first and third day are both included in the computation. This is farther illustrated by him and others, who treat on this subject, viz. that the scripture often speaks of a number of days, inclusive of the first and last; as when it is said, *When eight days were accomplished, our Saviour was circumcised*, Luke xii. 21. including the days of his birth and circumcision, between which six days intervened.\* Thus our Saviour continued three days in the state of the dead, inclusive of the first and last; or, he rose again, the third day, according to the scriptures.

We shall now consider what reasons may be assigned why providence ordered that Christ should continue three days, and no longer, in the state of the dead.

1. It seems agreeable to the wisdom of God that there should be some space of time between his death and resurrection, that so there might be a sufficient evidence that he was really dead, since much depends on our belief thereof. He might have breathed forth his soul into the hands of God one moment, and received it again, as raised from the dead, the next: but God, in wisdom, ordered it otherwise; for, had he expired, and rose from the dead, in so short a time, it might have been questioned whether he died or no; whereas his lying in the grave till the third day, puts this matter beyond all dispute.

2. It was agreeable to the goodness and care of providence that our Saviour should not continue too long in the state of

\* This observation is of use for the explaining the sense of several scriptures, which contain a seeming contradiction between them: thus, in Luke ix. 28. it is said, About eight days after these sayings, Jesus took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray; whereas Mark says, in chap. ix. 2. that this was done after six days, Luke speaks of the eight days, inclusive of the first and last; Mark speaks of eight days, exclusive of them both, which is but six days.

the dead: had he continued several years in the grave, there could not have been an appeal to his resurrection, during all that space of time, to confirm the faith of his people concerning his mission. God would not keep his people too long in suspense, whether it was he that was to redeem Israel; nor would he too long delay the pouring forth of his Spirit, or the preaching of the gospel, which were designed to be deferred till Christ's rising from the dead; and it seems most convenient that he should soon rise from the dead, that is, on the third day, that the world might have a convincing proof of his resurrection, while his death was fresh in their memories, and the subject-matter of the discourse of all the world. And they, having been told of this before-hand, were, or ought to have been in expectation of this wonderful and glorious event; and consequently it would be an expedient for their greater conviction.

*Object.* To what has been said concerning Christ's arising again on the third day, so as that he lay but one whole day in the grave, and a part of two days, it is objected, that he is said, in Matt. xii. 40. *to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, which includes a longer time than what is before mentioned; therefore he was crucified on the fifth day of the week, not on the sixth; and it is also contrary to what has been said concerning his being crucified on the preparation before the Sabbath.

*Answer.* In answer to this objection, let it be considered,

1. That it cannot be denied, according to the scripture-account of time, that the measure of a day contains the space of time, from one evening to the next, which is twenty-four hours. This we call a natural day, the night being the first part thereof, and not the morning according to our computation, as we reckon a day to contain the space of time from one morning to the next. The reason why the Jews thus begin their day, is, because it is said, *The evening and the morning were the first day*, Gen. i. 5. and the Sabbath day was reckoned to continue the space of time, from the evening of the sixth day, to the evening of the seventh, viz. from sun-set to sun-set; as it is said, *From even unto even shall ye celebrate your sabbath*, Lev. xxiii. 32. This farther appears, from what is said concerning our Saviour's *going into Capernaum, and, on the Sabbath day, entering into the synagogue, and teaching*; whereas it is said, in a following verse, *When the Sabbath was over, they brought unto him all that were diseased and possessed with devils; and the city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, &c.* Mark i. 21. compared with ver. 32—34. from whence it appears, that the Sabbath was over at sun-set that day; for the Jews, thinking it unlaw-

ful to heal on the Sabbath day, as they expressly say elsewhere, would not bring those who had diseases to be healed till the Sabbath was past.

2. When a whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, is spoken of in scripture, it is generally called a day and a night, or an evening and a morning. The Jews have no compound word to express this by, as the Greeks \* have: thus it is said, *Unto two thousand and three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed*, Dan. viii. 14. The word which we render *days*, in the Hebrew, signifies, as our marginal reference observes, *evening morning*, or so many spaces of time, each of which consists of evening and morning; and elsewhere it is said, that Moses was upon the mount *forty days and forty nights*, Exod. xxiv. 28. that is, forty of those spaces of time, which we call days, each of which make a day and a night; so that a day and a night, according to the Hebrew way of speaking, imports no more than a day; therefore, when our Saviour is said to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, it is an hebraism, which signifies no more than three days, or three of those spaces of time, each of which being completed, consists of a day and a night.

3. It is a very common thing, in scripture, for a part of a day to be put for a day, by a *synecdoche* of the part for the whole; therefore a part of that space of time, which, when completed, contains day and night, or the space of twenty-four hours, is called; therefore that which is done on the third day, before it is completely ended, is said to take up three days in doing: thus Esther says, *Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day; I also and my maidens will fast likewise, and so will I go unto the king*, Esth. iv. 16. whereas it is said after this, that *on the third day Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the court of the king's house*, chap. v. 1. therefore she could not be said to fast three whole days, but a part thereof; for, before the third day was ended, she went to the king. Therefore a part of three days, or that which is said to be done after three days, or three days and three nights, which is all one, that may be said to be done on the third day, though not completely ended. Therefore our Saviour may be said to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, that is, a part of those spaces of time, which, if completed, would have contained three days and three nights.

VI. Christ raised himself from the dead by his own power. Here let it be considered,

1. That no power but what is divine, can raise the dead, since it is a bringing back the dissolved frame of nature into the same, or a better state than that in which it was before its

\* This they call *νύχθημερον*.



dissolution, and a remanding the soul, which was in the hand of God that it may be again united to its body, which none can do, but God himself. Accordingly the apostle mentions it as a branch of the divine glory, and God is represented, as he *who quickeneth all things*, 1 Tim. iv. 13. therefore the body of Christ was raised by divine power: thus the apostle says, *This Jesus hath God raised up*, Acts ii. 32. and, when he mentions it elsewhere, he makes use of a phrase that is uncommonly emphatical; he wants words to express it, when he speaks of *the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead*.\*

2. Since the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are God, as has been observed under a foregoing answer,† it follows, that this infinite power belongs equally and alike to them all, and therefore all these divine Persons may be said to have raised Christ's body from the dead. That the Father raised him, no one denies that speaks of the resurrection; and the apostle expressly says, *that he was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, Rom. vi. 4. And it is farther said, that he raised himself from the dead: thus he tells the Jews, speaking of the temple of his body, *destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, John ii. 19. And that the Holy Ghost raised him, seems to be implied in that expression, in which it is said, *He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 4. that is, the Spirit, by this act of divine power, declared him to have been the Son of God, and to have finished the work he came about; and elsewhere he is said to be *quickened by the Spirit*, 1 Pet. iii. 18.

3. Christ, by raising himself by his own power, declared that he was the Son of God, that is, not only a divine Person, which his Sonship always implies, but his mission and authority to act as Mediator; and also that he had accomplished the work that he came into the world about.

As to what our Saviour says, concerning his raising himself by his own power; the Socinians apprehending this to be an argument tending to overthrow the scheme they lay down, who deny his divinity, are forced to make use of a very sorry evasion, when they pretend to give the sense of that scripture before mentioned, *Destroy this temple, and after three days I will raise it up*. They suppose, that the meaning is only this, that the Father put life into his dead body, and united it to the soul, and, after that, he lifted himself up out of the grave, which is certainly a very jejune and empty sense of the words:

\* Eph. i. 19, 20. υπερβαλον υπερβολης της δυναμεις αυτης, power that is great, even to an hyperbole.

† See Quest IX. XI

Is it so great a matter for a Person, who was quickened by divine power, to lift up himself from the grave, in which he lay? In this sense, any one may be said to raise himself up, as well as Christ, or any one might raise the dead after this, by taking him by the hand, and lifting him up from the ground. This shews how much men are sometimes put to it to support a cause that is destitute of solid arguments for its defence. According to this method of reasoning, the whole world may be said to raise themselves at the last day, when God has put life into their dead bodies: but certainly more than this is implied in Christ's raising himself up, inasmuch as it is opposed to his body's being destroyed, or the frame of nature's being dissolved in death; therefore he certainly intends that he would exert divine power, in raising himself from the dead, and hereby declare himself to be a divine Person, or the Son of God.

VII. We are next to consider the effects of Christ's resurrection, either as they respect himself or his people.

1. As to what concerns himself. This was a demonstrative evidence that he had fully satisfied the justice of God, or paid the whole price of redemption, which he had undertaken to do; for hereby he was released out of the prison of the grave, not only by the power, but the justice of God, and received a full discharge; and accordingly was, in this respect, justified, and a full proof given that the work of redemption was brought to perfection.

It is also observed, that hereby he conquered death, and *destroyed him that had the power of it, to wit, the devil*, Heb. ii. 14. and so procured to himself a right to be acknowledged as *the Lord both of the dead and the living*, Rom. xiv. 9. This is, in some respects, different from that universal dominion which he had over all things, as God, which was the result of his being the Creator of all things and was not purchased or conferred upon him, as the consequence of his performing the work which he came into the world about: I say, this dominion, which we are considering, is what belongs to him as Mediator; and it includes in it a peculiar right which he has, as Mediator, to confer on his people those blessings which accompany salvation; and his right to give laws to his church, defend them from their spiritual enemies, and bestow all the blessings on them, which were promised to them in the covenant of grace, and also in his ordering all the affairs of providence to be subservient thereunto. Had he not designed to redeem any of the race of mankind, he would have had a dominion over the world, as God, the Judge of all; a right to condemn and banish his enemies from his presence: but he could not be said to exercise dominion in such a way, as it is displayed, with respect to the heirs of salvation; for that would have been inconsistent

with his divine perfections. Had he not died, and rose again, he would, indeed, have had a right to have done what he would with his creatures ; but as he could not, without this have redeemed any, so he could not confer, upon a peculiar people, that possession, which he is said hereby to have purchased.

2. The effects of Christ's resurrection, which respect his people, consist more especially in four things.

(1.) Their justification is owing hereunto. And we are said sometimes to be justified by his death, or *by his blood*, Rom. v. 9. so elsewhere we are said to be justified, both by his death and resurrection, in different respects, *Who is he that condemneth ? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again*, chap. viii. 34. by which some understand, that Christ, by his death paid the debt, which we had contracted, to the justice of God ; and, by his resurrection, he received a discharge, or acquittance, in their behalf, for whom he died, and rose again ; so that when he was discharged, his people might be said to be discharged in him, as their public Head and Representative. This is well expressed in our large English Annotations,\* *viz.* that " our justification, which was begun in his death, was perfected in his resurrection. Christ did meritoriously work our justification and salvation, by his death and passion ; but the efficacy and perfection thereof, with respect to us, dependeth on his resurrection. By his death, he paid our debt ; in his resurrection, he received our acquittance, Isa. liii. 8. *Being taken from prison, and from judgment.* When he was discharged, we, in him, and together with him, received our discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins ;" which is very agreeable to what is said in this answer, that he did all this as a public Person, the Head of his church. Nevertheless, there is another notion of our justification, which consists in our apprehending, receiving, or applying his righteousness by faith, which, as will be observed in its proper place,† cannot, from the nature of the thing, be said to be before we believe.

(2.) Another effect of Christ's resurrection, is our quickening in grace ; as it is said, *When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ*, Eph. ii. 5. This implies either that his death, being the procuring cause of all inherent grace begun in regeneration, and carried on in sanctification ; his was the first step taken in order to his applying what he had purchased ; and that afterwards we are raised, as the consequence thereof, from the death of sin, to a spiritual life of holiness ; or else it denotes that communion which believers have with Christ in his resurrection, as well as his death, as he is the Head and they the members ; which is agreeable to that peculiar mode of speaking, often used by the apostle Paul, who,

\* See the notes on Rom. iv. 25.

† See Quæst. LXX, LXXII.



in several places of his epistles, speaks of believers, as crucified, dead, and buried, risen, and ascended into heaven, and sitting at God's right hand, in heavenly places, in, or with Christ.\*

(3.) This is also a means for our support against our enemies, whose utmost rage can extend itself no farther than the grave. They, for whom Christ died, and rose again, shall obtain a glorious resurrection and eternal life with him; and therefore he advises his people *not to be afraid of them that kill the body, and, after that have no more power that they can do*, Luke xii. 4. which will farther appear, if we consider another effect of Christ's resurrection, viz.

(4.) That they are hereby assured of their resurrection from the dead at the last day. Christ's resurrection is, as it were, the exemplar and pledge of their's; as hereby he conquered death in his own Person, so he gives them ground to conclude, that this *last enemy*, which stands in the way of their complete blessedness, *shall be destroyed*, 1 Cor. xv. 26. accordingly it is said, that he is *risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept*, ver. 20. But this will be farther considered, under a following answer.†

QUEST. LIII. *How was Christ exalted in his ascension?*

ANSW. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having, after his resurrection, often appeared unto, and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of those things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations; forty days after his resurrection, he, in our nature, and as our Head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue, till his second coming at the end of the world.

QUEST. LIV. *How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?*

ANSW. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that, as God-man, he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth, and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies, furnish his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

\* See Page 182, ante.

† See Quest. LXXXVII.

**I**N the former of these answers, we have an account of Christ's ascension into heaven; in the latter, of his sitting at the right hand of God, which contains a circumstance of glory, that was immediately consequent hereupon. And accordingly we are led,

*First*, To consider Christ's ascension into heaven. Here we may observe,

1. The distance of time between his resurrection and ascension, and what he did during that interval. It is expressly said, that *he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them, viz. the apostles, forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts i. 3.* Some of the evangelists are more particular on this subject than others: but if we compare them together, we may observe,

1. That our Saviour, during this interval, did not converse freely and familiarly with the world, as he had done before his death, during the exercise of his public ministry; and, indeed, we cannot learn, from any account given by the evangelists of this matter, that he appeared, so as to make himself known, to any but his friends and followers. He might, it is true, have appeared to the Jews, and thereby confuted that lie, which they so studiously propagated, that his disciples came by night and stole him away, and consequently that he was not risen from the dead: but he thought, as he might well do, that he had given them sufficient proof, before his death, that he was the Messiah; and, since he designed that his resurrection should be undeniably attested, by those who were appointed to be the witnesses thereof, it was needless for him to give any farther proof of it. And, besides, his enemies being wilfully blind, obstinate, and prejudiced against him, he denied them any farther means of conviction, as a punishment of their unbelief; therefore he would not appear to them after his resurrection. And, indeed, had he done it, it is probable, considering the malicious obstinacy and rage which appeared in their temper, that they would have persecuted him again, which it was not convenient that he should submit to, his state of humiliation being at an end.

2. He did not continue all the forty days with his apostles; nor have we ground to conclude that he abode with them in their houses, as he did before his death, nor did he eat and drink with them, excepting in two or three particular instances, mentioned by the evangelist, Luke xxiv. 41—43. John xxi. 13. the design of which was to prove, that, after his resurrection, he had as true an human body, with all the essential properties thereof, as he had before his death; and therefore was not, as they supposed him to be, when first they saw him, a spectrum.

All the account we have of his appearing to his friends and followers, is, that it was only occasionally, at such times as they did not expect to see him. At one time, he appeared to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and made himself known to them, when they came to their journey's end, and then withdrew himself in an instant; afterwards, we read of his appearing to the apostles, when they were engaged in social worship, on the day of his resurrection; and also, that he appeared to them again on the first day of the following week, John xx. 19. compared with ver. 26. and another time at the sea of Tiberias, chap. xxi. 1. and it is expressly said, after this, that *this was now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead*, ver. 14. And, besides this, we read elsewhere of his being *seen of above five hundred brethren at once*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. which was probably in Galilee, where his followers generally lived, which was the country in which he mostly exercised his public ministry before his death. This seems to have been appointed as a place of general rendezvous, if we may so express it, as he says, *After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee*, Mark xiv. 28. and the angel gives the same intimation, *Go your way, tell his disciples that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you*, chap. xvi. 7. Now this intimation being, as is more than probable, transmitted to his followers, five hundred of them waited for him there, and accordingly he appeared to them. All these appearances were only occasional; he principally designing thereby to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, and to give his apostles, in particular, instruction concerning some things, which they were unapprised of before. Thus concerning the time which Christ continued here on earth, in which he sometimes appeared to his disciples.

We now proceed to consider what he imparted to them, during his stay with, or at those particular times when he appeared to them. Here we cannot certainly determine any thing farther than the account we have thereof in scripture, in which, as was before observed, it is said, that *he spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*. By the *kingdom of God*, I humbly conceive, is meant either that glorious state and place to which he was to ascend, where they should, at last, be with him, which was a very useful and entertaining subject, and they could not but be happy in hearing those things from him; or else, we are hereby to understand the gospel-state, which, in the New Testament, is often called *the kingdom of God*, or *the kingdom of heaven*. And accordingly, as he designed they should be his ministers, whom he would employ in preaching the gospel, and thereby promoting the affairs of his kingdom; it was necessary that they should receive instructions concerning this



matter, without which they could do nothing for the promoting his interest in the world; or, at least, they must have a particular direction from the Holy Spirit relating thereunto, or else, they would have had no warrant to give instructions to the church concerning this new dispensation. We have no ground to doubt but that they had the Spirit's direction in every thing that they laid down for the church, as a rule of faith, or practice, afterwards: this they seem not to have had, while our Saviour was with them; however, it is more than probable it was a part of what he discoursed with them about, as he ordered them to teach those, to whom they were sent, to *observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them*, Matt. xxviii. 20.

(1.) We have sufficient ground to conclude, that he gave them direction concerning the observation of the first day of the week, as the Christian Sabbath. He had told them, before his death, that he was *Lord of the Sabbath*, Mark ii. 28. and now we may suppose that he more eminently discovered himself to be so, by changing the day from the seventh to the first day of the week. That they had this intimation from him, concerning the Christian Sabbath, seems probable, because it was observed by them, in the interval between his resurrection and ascension; and, we read, more than once, of his giving countenance to their observance of it, by his presence with them; whereas, at this time, the Holy Ghost was not poured forth upon them; therefore their practice herein seems to be founded on some intimation given them by our Saviour, during his continuance with them forty days; though perhaps this might be confirmed to them afterwards, by extraordinary revelation from the Holy Ghost.

(2.) It was in this interval that our Saviour gave them a commission to preach the gospel to all nations, and instituted the ordinance of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19. which differs very much from the commission he had before given to his twelve disciples, when he ordered them *not to go in the way of the Gentiles, nor to enter into any city of the Samaritans, but rather to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, chap. x. 5, 6. whereas now none are excluded, but their commission must be exercised throughout the whole world, wherever they came; and, together with this, he promised *to be with them*, so as to assist and succeed them in their ministry, *to the end of the world*. Moreover, he enjoined them *to tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until they were endued with power from on high, waiting there for the promise of the Father*, or for their being baptized by the Holy Ghost, which privilege they should soon after receive, Luke xxiv. 49. compared with Acts i. 4, 5. This was a very necessary advice which our Saviour gave them; for, though they had a commission to preach the gospel, they wanted those

qualifications for it, which they were to receive from the Holy Ghost. They were also to tarry at Jerusalem, after they had received extraordinary gifts from the Holy Ghost till they had an intimation given, in what parts of the world they should begin the exercise of their public ministry.

(3.) Though it be not particularly mentioned in the evangelical history, yet it is not improbable, that our Saviour spake to his disciples concerning the nature of the gospel-church, and its government, and how they were to exercise their ministry therein; what doctrines they should preach, and what success should attend them; and also what they should suffer for his sake. Why may we not suppose that he spake of these things to all his apostles, when he condescended to tell Peter, *by what death he should glorify God?* John xxi. 19. And their knowledge of many of these things was necessary for the right discharge of their ministry, which they were to begin at Jerusalem, where the first church was to be planted; and it can hardly be supposed that he would only give them a commission to preach the gospel, without some instructions relating thereunto: but; since this is only a probable argument, let me farther add, that it is certain they afterwards had particular direction from the Holy Ghost, relating hereunto, who was given, after Christ's ascension into heaven, to lead them into all truth, or to impart, by them, to the gospel-church, an infallible and standing rule of faith and practice.

II. After our Saviour had continued forty days on earth from his resurrection, and, in that time, conversed with his apostles of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God; it is observed, that he ascended into heaven, or, as it is here expressed, visibly went up into the highest heavens. There are two phrases, in scripture, whereby this is set forth: thus it is said, *He was taken up*, and *he went up*, Acts i. 9, 10. which variation of expression is used by the Holy Ghost, as some think, to denote two different respects, or circumstances, attending his ascension. *His going up*, signifies, that he ascended into heaven by his own power, pursuant to that right which he had to that glory; as he says elsewhere, *Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory?* Luke xxiv. 26. And when it is said, he was *taken up* into heaven, that signifies the Father's act in exalting him. As he sent him into the world, so he took him out of it, into a better, when he had finished his work upon earth. This variety of expression we find used in several other scriptures: thus it is said, that *he ascended up on high*, Eph. iv. 8. *entered into heaven*, Heb. ix. 24. and so put in his claim to the heavenly glory; and, on the other hand, it is said, that *he was received up into heaven*, Mark xvi. 19. and consequently his claim to it admitted of, and accordingly he was *exalted* to this

honour by God's right hand, Acts ii. 33. as what was due to him, as the consequence of his sufferings.

But, that we may more particularly consider what it was for Christ to ascend into heaven,

1. We are not to understand hereby that his divine nature was translated from earth to heaven, or changed the place of its residence; for that is contrary to the omnipresence thereof. Whenever a change of place is ascribed to it, it respects not his essential, but his manifestative presence. Though it was united to the human nature, yet it was not confined to it, or limited by it; and though it displayed its glory therein, in one way, whilst he was here on earth, and in another, when he ascended into heaven; yet, considered as to its essential glory, it fills all places; in which respect it is said, that he was in heaven whilst here on earth.\*

2. When we say, that Christ ascended into heaven in his human nature, this is not to be understood in a metaphorical sense, as though it denoted only his being advanced to a more glorious state, than he was in before his death; since heaven signifies a glorious place, as well as state. Were it only to be taken in the former sense, it might, for the same reason, be said, that there are no saints, or angels, locally in heaven, since the metaphor might as well be applied to them, as to our Saviour, which is directly contrary to the known acceptance of the word in scripture. Moreover, that his ascending into heaven denotes a change of place, as well as state, is evident, inasmuch as, though his state of humiliation was over immediately after his resurrection; yet he says, concerning his human nature, that, during his abode forty days here on earth, though raised from the dead, *I am not yet ascended to my Father*, John xx. 17. therefore,

3. His ascension into heaven is to be understood, in the most proper and known sense of the word, inferring a change of place, as well as state, denoting his being carried from this lower to the upper world, in his human nature, and so entering into that glorious place, as well as triumphant state. This is called, *The heaven of heavens*, Psal. cxlviii. 4. which gives us ground to conclude, that the word *heaven* is taken in various senses in scripture: thus it is sometimes taken for the air; and accordingly *the fowls*, that fly in it, are said to *fly in the midst of heaven*, Rev. xix. 17. and sometimes it is taken for the clouds, and so we read of the *rain*, Deut. xi. 11. or *dew of heaven*, Gen. xxvii. 28. as coming down from thence; and sometimes it is taken for the stars, as we read of the *stars of heaven*, chap. xxii. 17. but, besides all these senses of the word, it is taken for the seat of the blessed, the throne of God, where he mani-

\* See Vol. I. page 547



feasts himself, in a glorious manner, to his saints and angels. To this place Christ ascended; and, in this respect, it is not only said that he *went* into heaven, but that *he was made higher than the heavens*, Heb. vii. 26. or that *he ascended far above all heavens*, Eph. iv. 10. Thus it is said, in this answer, that he *went up* into the highest heaven.

Now that Christ ascended into heaven, and that in a visible and glorious manner is evident from the account we have hereof in scripture: which, together with the circumstances that went immediately before it, is what is next to be considered. Accordingly we read, in scripture,

That when the eleven disciples were assembled together, he came with a design to take his leave of them; and, after having *opened their understandings that they might understand the scriptures*, and had farther confirmed their faith, by applying them to himself, and had concluded all those necessary instructions, which he gave them, *he led them as far as Bethany*; and then it is said, in Luke xxiv. 50—53. *He lift up his hands and blessed them; and, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried into heaven*. But, inasmuch as this relation seems somewhat different from the account given of it by the same inspired writer, in Acts i. 12. who observes, that, when Christ had ascended into heaven, in the sight of his disciples, *they returned to Jerusalem, from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey*; and therefore it is plain that he ascended into heaven from that mountain; how then could he ascend thither from Bethany? It is observed, that Bethany, John xi. 18. was about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and the mount of Olives a Sabbath-day's journey; so that Bethany and the mount of Olives seem to be almost a mile distant from each other: if Christ ascended from one of these places into heaven, how could he then be said to ascend from the other.

The answer that may be given to this seeming inconsistency, between these two accounts of the place from whence Christ ascended into heaven, is, that the town of Bethany was situate at the foot of the mount of Olives; therefore that part of the mountain that was nearest to it, might have two names, to wit, Olivet, which was the name of the whole mountain, or Bethany, which denomination it might take from the adjoining village.

Or, if this be not sufficient to account for the difficulty before mentioned, we may suppose, that when the evangelist says, in one of these places, that our Saviour *led them out as far as Bethany*, he does not say he was taken up into heaven from thence; but, after he led them there, *he blessed them, and, while he blessed them, he was parted from them*; therefore it is proba-

ble, that, when he was come to Bethany he gave them an intimation that he should soon be received into heaven; and, while he was going from thence, or going up the mount of Olives, he continued blessing them; and, when he was come up to that part of the mount from whence he ascended, he *lifts up his hands*, and conferred his last benediction on them, upon which he *was parted from them, and a cloud received* and conveyed him to heaven; so that there is no inconsistency between the two scriptures, as to the place from whence he ascended. It is farther observed, that his ascension was visible; *they looked steadfastly towards heaven as he went up*, Acts i. 10.

From this account of Christ's ascension into heaven, we may make two or three remarks.

1st, As to the place from whence he ascended, which was the mount of Olives, it may be observed, that it was the same place to which he often retired, when he was at Jerusalem, to converse with God in secret, Luke xxiii. 39. Here it was that he was in his agony, ver. 44. in which he sweat great drops of blood, when having a very terrible apprehension of the wrath of God, which he was to bear, as a punishment due to our sin, which was the most bitter part of his sufferings; and therefore here he chose to begin his triumphs, as from hence he ascended into heaven. And hereby it seems, as it were, to give an intimation to his people, that they ought to set the glory, which they shall be advanced to, against the sufferings of this present life, as a ground of encouragement and support to them. That place, which, at one time, discovered nothing but what was matter of distress and anguish of spirit; at another time opened a glorious scene of joy and happiness. This mountain, which before had been a witness to that horror and amazement, in which our Saviour was, when in the lowest depths of his humbled state, now represents him as entering immediately into his glory.

The place in the mountain, from whence he ascended, is not particularly mentioned; nor is there any mark of sanctity put on it; though the Papists with a great deal of superstition, pretend to discover the very spot of ground from whence our Saviour ascended, and impose on those who will believe them, by shewing them the print of the feet, which, they suppose, he left behind him upon the mountain; in which place they have erected a church, open at the top, to signify his ascension into heaven: but this is little better than a fabulous conjecture. It is an easy matter to find some hollow place, in any mountain; but to say that any such small valley was made by our Saviour's feet, as a memorial of his ascending from thence, is nothing else but an imposition on the credulity of ignorant persons, without scripture-warrant.

2dly, From what is said concerning Christ's conversing with his disciples about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, we may observe, that the work he was engaged in, just before his ascension into heaven, was of such a nature, that it is a very desirable thing for a person, when called out of the world to be found so doing. Our Saviour's whole conversation, while on earth, had some way or other, a reference to the kingdom of heaven, and had a tendency to bring his people there; and this was the last subject that he conversed with them about.

3dly, What is said concerning his blessing them when he was parted from them, was agreeable to what is mentioned concerning Elijah, whose translation into heaven was a type of Christ's ascension thither, concerning whom it is said, that he bade Elisha *ask what he should do or desire of God for him, before he was taken from him*, 2 Kings ii. 9. As the great design of our Saviour's coming into the world, was to be a public blessing to his people; so the last thing he did for them, was blessing them, and that either by conferring blessedness upon them, as a divine Person, or else by praying for a blessing for them as man, whereby he gave them a specimen of the work which he is engaged in, in heaven, who ever lives to make intercession for them; and it is farther observed, that *he lift up his hands, and blessed them*. Sometimes when persons blessed others, they did it by laying their hands upon them: this Jacob did, when he blessed the sons of Joseph, Gen. xlviii. 14, as a sign of his faith, which was herein expressed, that blessings should descend from God upon them. And, when many persons were blessed at the same time, instead of laying their hands on them, they sometimes lifted them up; accordingly Aaron is said *to lift up his hands towards the people, and bless them*, Lev. ix. 22. So Christ lifted up his hands when he blessed his disciples, as an external sign of his lifting up his heart to God, while he prayed for the blessings which they stood in need of. Thus concerning Christ's ascension into heaven.

There is one thing more mentioned in this answer, which I cannot wholly pass over, namely, that he did this as our Head. The headship of Christ is a circumstance often mentioned by the apostle Paul, who supposes him to stand in this relation to his people, in every thing that he did for them as Mediator, in which he is considered as a public person, the Representative of all his elect, who acted in their name, as well as for their interest; which leads us to consider,

III. That it was necessary that Christ should ascend into heaven after he had finished his work on earth; for this was an accomplishment of what was foretold concerning him. This the Psalmist mentions, in a very beautiful and magnificent way, *Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting*



*doors, and the King of glory shall come in*, Psal. xxiv. 9. and elsewhere it is said; *Thou hast ascended on high*, Psal. cxviii. 18. which the apostle Paul particularly applies to his ascension into heaven, as a prediction thereof, Eph. iv. 8. and this was also signified by that eminent type of it, which was equivalent to a prediction, in the high priest's entering into the holiest of all, which the apostle also speaks of, as shadowing forth the same thing, Heb. ix. 7, 8, 9, 11, 24.

Moreover, this was foretold by our Saviour himself, whilst he was here on earth, before and after his death, when he tells his disciples; *I go to prepare a place for you*, John xiv. 2. and; *I ascend to my Father*, &c. chap. xx. 17. so that there was really an appeal to his ascension into heaven, as well as to his resurrection, for the proof of his mission, and his relation to God, as his Father, therefore it was necessary that he should ascend thither. It was also necessary, as this was a glory promised him, as the consequence of his sufferings; and accordingly *it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, to make the Captain of our salvation perfect, through, or after his sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10.

It was also necessary that he should ascend visibly into heaven, or that his apostles, who were to be witnesses thereof, as well as of his resurrection, should see him go thither: for this was necessary to be believed, as well as the other, and whatever they were to give their testimony to, must be the result of the fullest conviction; and therefore, that they might convince the world that he was ascended into heaven, they must be qualified to tell them, that they saw him ascend there.

*Object.* If it be objected, that, since they might give their testimony that he rose again from the dead, though they did not see him rise, they might attest the truth of his ascension, though they had not seen him ascend into heaven.

*Ans.* To this I answer. It is true, their witness that he was risen from the dead, was sufficient, though they did not see him rise, inasmuch as they saw him after he was risen, and had undeniable proofs that he was the same Person that suffered; yet there is a circumstance attending his ascension into heaven, which renders it necessary that they should see him ascend there, though it was not necessary that they should see him rise from the dead, in order to their giving conviction to the world as to this matter; for he did not design that they should see him, after his ascension, till his second coming to receive them into heaven, and then their testimony will be at an end; and therefore it was necessary that they should see him ascend. The apostle Paul, it is true, at his conversion, saw him clothed with his heavenly glory in his exalted state; but this was a singular and extraordinary instance, which he gave his other disciples

no ground to expect; therefore, that they might want no qualification that was necessary, in order to the fulfilling their testimony, he ascended into heaven visibly, in the presence of all his apostles.

IV. There are several great and valuable ends of Christ's ascension, mentioned in this answer, some of which were glorious to himself, and all of them advantageous to his people. Accordingly it is observed,

1. That he triumphed over his enemies; as the apostle says, *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive*, Eph. iv. 8. which is an allusion to the solemn triumphs of princes, after having obtained some remarkable and complete victories. Now the empire of Satan was demolished, his prisoners ransomed, and accordingly delivered from his power; and the gospel, which was to be preached throughout the world, was a public *proclamation of liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound*, Isa. lxi. 1. compared with Luke iv. 18.

2. Christ ascended into heaven, that he might receive gifts for men. The scripture seems to distinguish between Christ's purchasing and his receiving gifts for men; the former was done by his death; the latter was consequent on his ascension into heaven. There are two expressions used relating to this matter, namely, that of the Psalmist, *Thou hast received gifts for men*, Psal. lxxviii. 18. and the apostle's reference thereunto, when he says, *He gave gifts unto men*, Eph. iv. 8. that is, he received gifts for men, with a design to give them to them, which he did, after his ascension into heaven, when there was a very great effusion of the Spirit on the gospel-church erected, and furnished with a variety of ministers, such as *Apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*, ver. 11, 12. which is a farther allusion to the custom of princes in their triumphs, on which occasion they extend their royal bounty to their subjects.

3. Christ's ascension into heaven to *prepare a place* for his people, as he told them he would do, after his death, John xiv. 2. and accordingly he is said to *have entered there as the Forerunner*, Heb. vi. 20. and so he took possession of those heavenly mansions in their name, to which he designs, at last, to bring them.

4. It is farther observed, that he ascended into heaven, to raise up their affections thither, and to induce them to *set their affections on things above*, Colos. iii. 2. That place is always most dear to us, which is our home, our rest, where our best friends reside; our thoughts are most conversant about it, and we are inclined to desire to be with them there; therefore

Christ's being in heaven, together with all his saints, is a motive to all believers to have their *conversation in heaven*, which is the character given of them by the apostle, Phil. iii. 20.

5. The last thing observed in this answer is, that Christ designed to continue in heaven till his second coming at the end of the world; as it is said, *Whom the heavens must receive, till the time of the restitution of all things*, Acts iii. 21. and then he will come again in this lower world, not to reside or fix his abode here, but to receive his people into heaven, where they shall be with him to all eternity, as it is said, *So shall we ever be with the Lord*, 1 Thes. iv. 17. Thus concerning Christ's exaltation in his ascension into heaven; we now proceed to consider him,

*Secondly*, As exalted in sitting at the right hand of God, which is a glory that was conferred upon him after his ascension into heaven. This is a figurative way of speaking, which the Holy Ghost condescends to make use of; and it cannot be understood in any other sense, since God being a Spirit, is without body, or bodily parts; and, being immense, *the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him*, 1 Kings viii. 27. therefore it does not denote the situation of Christ's human nature in some particular part of heaven, but his being advanced to the highest honour there. As the *right hand*, amongst men, is used to signify some peculiar marks of honour conferred on them who are seated there; thus when Bathsheba went in unto king Solomon, he caused a seat to be set for her, and she sat at his *right hand*, chap. ii. 19. So when Christ is said to *sit on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*, Heb. viii. 1. it denotes the highest degree of honour conferred on him, as Mediator; and particularly his sitting there denotes,

1. That glorious rest which he enjoys, after having sustained many labours and afflictions in this world; a sweet repose, and perfect deliverance from all those things which formerly tended to make him uneasy, while in his way to it.

2. It also implies that honour and supreme authority which he is invested with. Others are represented as servants standing in the presence of God; accordingly it is said, *Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him*, Dan. vii. 10. but Christ is distinguished from them all by this mark of regal dignity, in that he *sits and rules upon his throne*, Zech. vi. 13. Thus the apostle says, concerning him, that, having *purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, intimating, that he was made so much better than the angels, as he hath,



*by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they, Heb. i. 3, 4. which he farther proves, when he says, To which of the angels, said he, at any time, sit on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool, ver. 13.*

3. It also signifies the perpetuity, or eternal duration of his Mediatorial glory and authority, as to *sit*, in scripture, often signifies, to abide: but this has been before considered, when we spake concerning the eternity of Christ's kingdom \*. There are other things, mentioned in this answer, which are the fruits and effects of Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, to wit, the exercise of his power over all things in heaven and earth; and, as the consequence thereof, gathering and defending his church, subduing their enemies, and furnishing his ministers with gifts and graces: but these will be more particularly insisted on, under a following answer, in which we shall be led to speak concerning the special privileges of the visible church †. Therefore what we are next to consider is, that Christ, as sitting at the right hand of God, makes intercession for his people.

QUEST. LV. *How doth Christ make intercession?*

ANSW. Christ maketh intercession, by his appearing in our nature, continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers, answering all accusations against them, procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

THE intercession of Christ, as has been observed, under a foregoing answer, is a branch of his priestly office, and is founded on his satisfaction. The reason why it is mentioned in this place, after we have had an account of his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, is, as I conceive, because the apostle lays down these heads in the same order, when he speaks of them, *It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, Rom. viii. 34.* In speaking concerning Christ's intercession,

I. We shall consider the necessity thereof; and that,

1. Because this was foretold and typified. It was predicted, concerning him, that he should *make intercession for transgressors, Isa. liii. 12.* and elsewhere God the Father is re-

\* See Page 393.

† See Quest. lxii, lxiii.

presented, as saying to him, *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*, Psal. ii. 8. which words, though they contain the form of a command, are, doubtless, a prediction relating to this matter, whereby it is intimated, that the glorious success of the gospel, when preached to the world, should not only be the purchase of his death, but the consequence of his intercession; and what Elihu speaks of an advocate, as pleading the cause of a poor afflicted person, and saying, *Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom; and as it is farther added; He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable to him, and he shall behold his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness*, Job xxxiii. 23, 24, 26. seems rather to be understood of Christ than any other; for it is most agreeable to the character given him of a messenger with him, and an interpreter one among a thousand, and his being gracious unto him, when he thus makes intercession for him.

Moreover, when the Psalmist represents him, as saying, concerning his enemies, *I will not take up their names into my lips*, Psal. xvi. 4. it plainly intimates his design to intercede for all others, namely, for his people. And that David does not here speak in his own person, but in the person of Christ, is very evident, because it was his duty, in common with all mankind, to pray for his enemies; and therefore he speaks of another sort of intercession, *viz.* Christ's, that which is different from that which one man is obliged to make for another. This appears, in that, in some following verses, we have a prediction of his rising from the dead before he saw corruption, as it is particularly applied to him in the New Testament, Acts ii. 31.

And to this we may add; that as Christ's intercession was expressly foretold by the prophets; so it was typified by the High Priest's entering every year into the holy of holies, with blood and incense, to appear before God in the behalf of the people, as making intercession for them. This is expressly applied to Christ, as the anti-type, and his *entering into heaven; now to appear in the presence of God for us*, Heb. ix. 7, 9. compared with ver. 11, 12, 24.

2. Christ's intercession was necessary, as the condition of fallen man required it. Some have been ready to conclude, that, by reason of that infinite distance there is between God and man, it was necessary that there should be an advocate to procure for him a liberty of access to God: but that does not evidently appear, for as we have no ground to conclude, that the holy angels, though infinitely below him, are admitted into

his presence, or made partakers of the blessings, that are the result thereof, by the intervention of an advocate, or intercessor, with him, in their behalf; so man would not have stood in need of a Mediator, or advocate, to bring him into the presence of God, or plead his cause, any more than he would have needed a Redeemer, had he not fallen: but his present circumstances require both; it is necessary therefore that Christ should intercede for him.

(1.) Because, being guilty, he is rendered unworthy to come into the presence of God, and actually excluded from it; as the Psalmist says, *Thou art not a God that hast pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity*, Psal. v. 4, 5. This punishment is the immediate consequence of guilt, whereby the sinner is exposed to the curse of God, whose holiness obliges him to order such to depart from him. Moreover, there is a servile fear, or dread of him, as a consuming fire that attends it; upon which account, he desires rather to fly from, than to have access to him; therefore he needs an intercessor to procure this privilege for him.

(2.) There are many accusations brought in against him, as a ground and reason why he should be excluded from the divine favour, and not have any saving blessings applied to him, which must all be answered; and therefore there is need of an advocate to plead his cause.

II. None but Christ our great Mediator and advocate, is fit to manage this important work for us. We cannot plead our own cause; for guilt stops our mouths, as well as renders us unworthy of any blessing from God. And it is certain that no mere creature can do this for us; for none can speak any thing in their favour, who are under a sentence of condemnation, unless an expedient were found out to bring them into a state of reconciliation with God, for that would tend to the dishonour of his justice; and none can plead for any blessing to be bestowed on them, but he who was able to make atonement for them, which no mere creature could do, since the greatest price, that he can give, is far from being of infinite value: but such a price as this Christ has laid down, as has been before considered, in speaking concerning his priestly office; and therefore he alone is fit to be an advocate, or intercessor, for his people; which leads us to consider,

III. That Christ is his people's advocate, or makes intercession for them. This appears from several scriptures; thus it is said, *He ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25. and *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, 1 John ii. 1.



1. Christ is represented as making intercession for his people before his incarnation; as when it is said, Zech. iii. 2. *The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee; O Satan\**.

2. After his incarnation, he interceded for his people in his human nature; and while he was here on earth, he did it agreeably to that state, in which he then was, though the efficacy of his intercession depended on his compleating the work of our redemption, which was not done before he arose from the dead; in which respect, there was something proleptical in his intercession then, as well as when he is represented as making intercession before his incarnation; therefore,

3. As the price of redemption was not fully paid till his state of humiliation was at an end, upon which account he is generally styled a consummate Mediator from that time, when he was *made perfect through sufferings*, Heb. ii. 10. so he was, after that, a compleat advocate, or intercessor, for his people; in which respect, he is said, in a way of eminency, *to make intercession for them*, after his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, in his glorified state, in which he manages their cause with an advantageous plea, which he could not use, while here on earth; for then he had not accomplished his work of redemption, and therefore could only plead the promise made to him, upon condition of his bringing that work to perfection, which was then only begun. And also whatever act of worship he then performed, it was agreeable to that state of humiliation, in which he was: but now he is in heaven, and consequently his work of redemption finished; he pleads his absolute and actual right to receive those blessings for his people, and apply them to them, which God before had promised in the covenant of redemption; and this he does with those circumstances of glory, that are agreeable to his exalted state, as sitting at God's right hand, and having such visible marks of the divine favour, that nothing can be denied him that he asks for. It is true, while he was here on earth, he says, *Father I thank thee, that thou hearest me always*, &c. John xi. 41, 42. which he might well say, inasmuch as there was sufficient security, or ground to conclude, that he could not fail in the work which he was engaged in, so as to leave it incomplete. How much more may he say this, when he is in his exalted state, and pleads as one that has brought the work, he came into the world about, to perfection?

\* Christ did not intercede for his church before his incarnation formally, inasmuch as it is inconsistent with his divine nature to pray; prayer being an act of worship; but virtually, by which we are to understand that all the blessings which the church then enjoyed, were founded on the sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, he designed to offer; and this is, by a prolepsis, represented as though it had been then done, in the same sense as he is elsewhere said to be the Lamb slain, from the foundation of the world. See page 397.

And to this let me add, that he will intercede for his people for ever, as he shall always continue in this exalted state. And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise; if Christ's presence in heaven be a full and comprehensive plea for all the blessings we enjoy or hope for; then so long as he shall abide there, he will intercede for us, and that will be for ever. That this may farther appear, let it be considered; that the sacrifice, which he offered for his people while on earth, procured for them not only the blessings they enjoy in this world, but those that they shall be possessed of in heaven. And as his being received into heaven was a convincing evidence, that what he did and suffered, before he went thither, was accepted, and deemed effectual to answer all the valuable ends thereof; so his continuance there will remain a standing and eternal evidence thereof; which contains in it the nature of a plea. But this respects not only the blessings they now enjoy, but all that they hope for, therefore their eternal happiness is, founded thereon; which is what the apostle principally intends, when he says, *He ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25.

IV. We shall now consider the difference between Christ's intercession for us with the Father, and our praying for ourselves, or others, and that when we address ourselves either to men or God.

1. When we intercede with men to obtain some favour from them, we hope, either by our arguments, or importunity, or at least, by our interest in them, or some obligation which we have laid them under, to persuade them to alter their minds, as we are treating with mutable creatures. But this is by no means applicable to Christ's intercession, in which he deals with an unchangeable God, who has, in various instances, declared his love to, and willingness to save all those, whose salvation he intercedes for; in which sense we are to understand our Saviour's words, *I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you*, John xvi. 26, 27.

Moreover, when we intercede with men for any favour, we don't usually present any price paid by us for the benefit we intercede for; but Christ in interceding for his people, presents the merit of his obedience and sacrifice, which is the only thing that renders it effectual.

2. When we pray to God for ourselves, or others, this differs from Christ's intercession, in that we present ourselves and our petitions to him in the name of Christ, and hope for a gracious answer, in the virtue of his mediation and righteousness; so that our access to God is mediate, Christ's immediate. We plead what he hath done for us, as our Surety.

and not any thing done by ourselves; but he pleads what was done by himself. We acknowledge, in all our supplications, that we are unworthy of the least of his mercies; whereas he appears in our behalf before God, as one who is worthy to have that granted which he pleads for.

V. We shall now consider how Christ makes intercession; and it is observed, that he does this,

1. By his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth. This is taken from the practice of attornies, or advocates, in civil courts, when a cause is to be tried, in which case the plaintiff or defendant does not appear himself, but his advocate appears for him: thus Christ *appears in the presenc: of God for us*. This virtually includes in it the nature of a plea. For the understanding of which, let it be considered, that as God cannot, consistently with the glory of his divine perfections, save any of the fallen race of mankind, upon any other condition, than that satisfaction should be given to his justice, and such a price of redemption paid, as tended to secure the glory of his holiness, and other perfections, he has, in his eternal covenant with the Son, promised, that if he would perform this work, then he would bring his people to glory. Christ, on the other hand, undertook it with this encouragement, that, when he had perfected it, he should be received into glory, as a public testimony that justice was fully satisfied; therefore his being set at God's right hand, in heavenly places, as the consequence thereof, is a convincing evidence, to angels and men, that his work is brought to perfection. Accordingly his being there, or appearing in heaven, contains in it the nature of a plea; more especially if we consider him as appearing there as our Head and compleat Redeemer, who has finished the work which he came into the world about. This I take to be the principal idea in Christ's intercession.

If it be farther enquired, whether he makes use of a voice, as we do, when we pray for ourselves, or others? I dare not deny that he does, since he made use of words when he prayed for his people on earth; which was a short specimen of his intercession for them in heaven: but yet it must be considered,

(1.) That it is impossible for words to express the particular necessities of every one, whom he appears for in heaven, at the same time; and to suppose that Christ represents the case of one at one time, and another at another, as we do when we pray for different persons, is hardly sufficient to answer all the valuable ends of his intercession, for all his people at all times; neither are we to suppose, since the human nature of Christ is not omniscient, that he has therein a comprehensive view, at once, of all the particular necessities of his peo-



ple, for that would be to confound his human nature with his divine; and it is only in the human nature that he prays, though the efficacy of this prayer is founded on the infinite value of his oblation performed therein, which was the result of its union with the divine, as has been before observed\*; therefore,

(2.) When Christ is said to make use of words in interceding for his people, these are principally to be considered, as expressive of their wants and infirmities in a general way; so that a few comprehensive words may include in them the general idea of those things that are common to them all. In this respect, I am far from denying that Christ, in interceding for his people, makes use of words; but, when we consider his being in heaven, or appearing in the presence of God in the behalf of his people, as virtually containing (as was before hinted) the nature of a plea, this extends itself to every particular necessity of those for whom he intercedes at all times.

2. It is farther observed, that Christ, in making intercession, declares his will to have the merit of his obedience and sacrifice applied to all believers: thus he says, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, &c.* John xvii. 24. in which he does, as it were, make a demand of what is due to him, in right of his purchase; and so it is distinguished from a supplication, or entreaty, that God would bestow an unmerited favour. All our prayers, indeed, are supplications, that God would bestow upon us undeserved blessings; but Christ's prayer is a kind of demand, of a debt due to him pursuant to the merit of his obedience and sufferings. Moreover, this mode of speaking may be farther understood, as containing an intimation of his divine will, to have what he purchased, in his human nature, applied to his people; though this is rather a consequence of his intercession, than, properly speaking, a formal act thereof.

3. It is farther observed, that he intercedes for his people, by answering all accusations that may be brought in against them: thus the apostle, Rom. viii. 33, 34. supposes a charge to have been brought in against God's elect, and that they were under a sentence of condemnation; and shews how this sentence is reversed by the death of Christ; and the charge answered by his intercession. If we consider the many things laid to the charge of God's elect, either by the world, satan, or their own consciences, these are supposed to be either false or true. What is falsely alleged, Christ, as their Advocate, answers, by denying the charge, and undertakes to vindicate them from it: but when the thing laid to their charge is undeniably true; as, for instance, that they are sinners, and have

\* See Page 235.

thereby contracted guilt, and deserve to be for ever banished from the presence of God; this Christ undertakes to answer, no otherwise than by pleading the merit of his obedience and satisfaction, whereby they obtain remission of sins and a right to eternal life.

VI. Christ, by his intercession, procures for his people many valuable privileges, three of which are mentioned in this answer.

(1.) Quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings. This supposes, that the best believers on earth, by reason of the remainders of indwelling corruption, are liable to many sinful infirmities; as it is said, *There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. and, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 John i. 8. And these have a proportionable degree of guilt attending them; and this guilt has a tendency to make the conscience uneasy, unless we have an Advocate, who has a sufficient plea to allege in our defence: but such an one is Christ, and consequently his intercession procures for us this privilege; *If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, chap. ii. 1.

(2.) He also procures for us access, with boldness, to the throne of grace. As sin renders us guilty; so guilt exposes us to fear, and a dread of coming before the throne of God, as a God of infinite holiness and justice: but when he is represented as sitting on a throne of grace, as the consequence of Christ's death and intercession, our servile fear is removed, and we are encouraged, as the apostle says, to *come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16.

(3.) Another consequence of Christ's intercession is, the acceptance of our persons and services; first, of our persons, then of our services; as it is said, *The Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering*, Gen. iv. 4. The acceptance of our persons is a branch of our justification, which is founded on Christ's sacrifice and intercession, as it is said, *He hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 6. And the acceptance of our services, which are performed by faith, supposes the removal of the guilt that attends them, by reason of our sinful infirmities: thus God's people are called an *holy priesthood*, and said to *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

VII. Let us consider how Christ's intercession ought to be improved by us.

1. It is a great remedy against those desponding or despairing thoughts, which we are sometimes liable to, by reason of the guilt of sin, when charged on our consciences; in which

case, we should give a check to ourselves, and say, with the Psalmist, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?* Psal. xlii. 10. Why should we entertain such sad and melancholy thoughts, especially if Christ intercedes, on our behalf, for the forgiveness of all our sins? and our sincere repentance, together with the exercise of those other graces, that accompany it, will afford us an evidence of our interest in this privilege, which will be an expedient to raise our dejected spirits, and fill us with the joy of his salvation.

2. Christ's intercession is to be improved by us, as an encouragement to prayer; and, as a farther ground, to conclude, that our poor, broken, imperfect breathings, shall be heard and answered for his sake, who pleads our cause.

3. This is a great inducement to universal holiness, when we have ground to conclude, that those services, that are performed to his glory, shall be accepted, upon the account of his intercession.

QUEST. LVI. *How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?*

ANSW. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day, in great power, and in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

**O**UR Saviour being in his exalted state, is to continue at the right hand of God, till he has finished the remaining part of his work, in the application of redemption, and, by his Spirit, in the methods of his providence and grace, brought in the whole number of the elect; after which follows another branch of his Mediatorial glory, when he shall come again to judge the world at the last day, which is the subject matter of this answer. For the understanding of which, let it be considered,

I. That though he was, before this, solemnly invested with a power of exercising judgment, and is continually distributing rewards and punishments in the course of his providence; yet the full manifestation of his glory, as Judge of quick and dead, and that in a visible manner in his human nature, is deferred till the last day. Though he be now known by the judgments that he executes, which are oftentimes attended with



wonderful displays of his divine glory; and, though the eternal state of all men be fixed by him at their death, at which time a particular judgment is passed on them by him, as the apostle says, *It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment*, Heb. ix. 27. yet this is done without those external and visible marks of glory in his human nature, with which he shall appear in the end of time. This is styled, *The last day*, John xi. 24. chap. xii. 48. and, in that respect, that measure of duration, which we generally call time, will be ended, and another, which is distinguished from it, which, by reason of its having no end, is called eternity, shall commence; not that it is like eternity of God, without succession: but some think it differs from time, principally in this, that it shall not be described by the same measures that it now is; nor shall the motion of the heavenly bodies produce those effects which they do, in the frame of nature, whereby the various changes of seed-time and harvest, summer and winter, day and night follow each other in their respective courses.

Some, indeed, think that this is called a *day*, in the same sense as the present season, or dispensation of grace, is sometimes called the sinner's *day*, Luke xix. 42. or the day of God's patience, and long-suffering. And when this shall be at an end, and the gospel, which is compared to a glorious light, that shines therein, shall be no longer preached, the end thereof being fully answered, this may well be styled the last day, when Christ shall come to judgment.

II. This glorious appearing of Christ to judge the world, is set in opposition to that part of his state of humiliation, in which he was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, and is designed to aggravate the crime of those, at whose tribunal he stood, who, though he then told them of this matter, namely, *that hereafter they should see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven*, Matt. xxvi. 64. yet they believed him not. And this may also be considered, as set in opposition to all that contempt, which his name, interest, and gospel, daily meet with, in an ungodly world, whereby he is, as it were, judged and condemned afresh, and the unjust sentence that was passed upon him, in effect, approved of; from all which, Christ shall be for ever vindicated, when his glory shines forth in a most illustrious manner, as calling the whole world to stand at his tribunal, and rewarding every one according to their works.

III. The time when Christ shall thus come to judge the world, is unknown, either by angels or men; and, indeed, our Saviour himself, while here on earth, speaks of this, as a secret, that had not been made known to him, as man, Mark xiii. 32. and the reason why God has thus concealed it, is because

he would not give occasion to any to indulge the least degree of carnal security, (for the same reason that he has not made known to us the term or bounds of life) but that we may be always ready for his coming. Therefore we cannot but reckon it an instance of unwarrantable presumption in several Jewish writers, and some of the Fathers after them,\* to suppose, as they do, that the world shall continue six thousand years, from the creation; and that, as it was made in six days, and the seventh ordained to be a Sabbath, this had a mystical signification; and accordingly, in its application to this matter, a day answers to a thousand years; or that, as the world was two thousand years without the written word, or law of God, and after that, two thousand years under the law, so the days of the Messiah shall continue two thousand years, and then follows the eternal sabbatism at Christ's second coming. As for the Jews, who speak of this matter, their unbelief is condemned out of their own mouths; since they do, as it were, concede, that the time in which the Messiah was to come, was that in which he actually appeared; notwithstanding, this is a groundless conjecture, so far as it respects the end of the world; and, indeed, it is an entering into a secret, which is altogether hid from mankind.

IV. We are now to consider that glory with which Christ shall appear, when he comes to judge the world. Accordingly it is said, he shall come in the full manifestation of his own glory, and of his Father's, with all his holy angels, and with other circumstances, that will be very awful and tremendous.

1. He shall come in his own glory, by which we are to un-

\* *As for the Jewish writers, they mention a tradition taken from one Elias, which, some think, refers to a spurious writing, that went under the name of the prophet Elijah: but this they leave uncertain: neither do they signify whether it was a written or an oral tradition; nor do they intimate when, or where, this Elias lived. However, the tradition was received by many of them. It is mentioned in the Talmud in Tract. Sanhedrim, cap. xi. § 29. Edit. a Cocc. Traditio est domus Eliæ: Sex mille annos durat mundus: bis mille annis inanitas & vastitas. Bis mille annis Lex. Denique bis mille annis dies Christi. At vero propter peccata nostra & plurima & enormia, abierunt ex bis, qui abierunt. And the same is mentioned in another Talmudic treatise, called, Arodi Sara, (Vid. eund. edit. ab Edzard. cap. 1. page 65. cum ejusd. annot. page 244, & seq.) And Munasseh Ben-Israel asserts the same thing, (Vid. ejusd. de Creat. Probl. 25.) Other writers, among them, improve upon this conjecture, and pretend, that as the sun was created the fourth day, so the Messiah was to come, after 4000 years, by which they appear to be self-condemned. However, as an expedient to disembarass themselves, they all pretend, that Christ's coming is deferred for their sins; which evasion is too weak to ward off the evidence which we have for the truth of Christianity. That several of the Fathers imbibed this notion, concerning the world's continuing 6000 years, according to the number of the days of the creation, is evident. Lactantius begins his Millennium then, and supposes, that the thousand years, from thence to the end of time, answers to the seventh day or Sabbath of rest. (Vid. Lactant. de Vit. Beat. § 14.) Augustin, who does not give into the Millennium, supposes, that time will end with the 6000 years, which answers to the sixth day of the creation; and then, according to him, follows an eternal sabbatism, (Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, Lib. XX. cap. 7.)*

derstand, that the glory of his divine nature shall shine forth, or be demonstrated in a more illustrious manner, than it has hitherto been. When he was here on earth, this glory had, as it were a veil put on it, by reason of the low and humbled state of his human nature: but, when he shall come again in his exalted state, it will never be a matter of doubt to any, whether he be God incarnate or no. And to this we may add, that there will be many things done by him, when he comes to judgment, which will be eminently the effects of his divine power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and faithfulness, whereby the glory of his divine nature will farther appear, in determining the final state, both of angels and men.

2. He is also said to appear in his Father's glory. For the understanding of which let us consider,

(1.) That whatever work he is engaged in, or glory he receives as Mediator, it takes its rise from the Father; it was he that called him to perform it, sanctified, and sent him into the world, furnished him with an human nature, united to his divine Person. From him it was that he received a commission to lay down his life, and to take it upon him again; and it is he who hath appointed the day in which he will judge the world; and, pursuant to this decree and appointment, he will come to perform this glorious work.

(2.) Every thing that he does as Mediator, is referred to the glory of the Father: as he says, *I honour my Father*, John viii. 49. and therefore this work, which is, as it were, the laying the top-stone of the glorious fabric of our salvation, will tend eminently to set forth the Father's glory, who laid the foundation stone thereof.

(3.) Whatever work he performs for the honour of the Father, he receives from him, a testimony of his highest approbation of him therein. When he was here on earth, as the apostle says, *He received from the Father honour and glory; when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*, 2 Pet. i. 17. This testimony was given to him at his baptism, and transfiguration in the holy mount; the latter of which the apostle more immediately refers to, as appears by the following words; therefore we may conclude,

(4.) That since his coming to judgment will be the most illustrious part of his mediatorial work, he will have the most glorious testimony from the Father; and, indeed, his receiving the saints into heaven, who are styled, *Blessed of his Father*, who shall *inherit the kingdom which he had prepared for them, from the foundation of the world*, Matt. xxv. 34. will be a standing monument of his approbation of him, or well-pleasedness with whatever he has done in order thereunto; and therefore he may well be said to come in the glory of his Father.



V. He is farther said to come in the glory of his angels. This, indeed is to be understood in a sense different from that of his appearing in his own glory, or that of his Father; for the angels are said rather to behold and admire his glory, than to confer any branch thereof upon him. However, they are described as attending him in his coming, as it is said, *He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him*, ver. 31. and accordingly he will appear in the glory of his angels, as they shall be his retinue, and bear a part in the solemnity of that day, whereby they not only acknowledge his rightful authority to engage in this glorious work, but their willingness to attend him in every part thereof, in which he thinks fit to employ them, as ministering spirits, in subserviency to the proceedings of that day. And this leads us to consider that glorious solemnity, together with some things that will be done, preparatory to Christ's judging the world. Accordingly it is said,

VI. That he shall come with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trumpet of God, which are the apostle's words, 1 Thes. iv. 16. and he adds, that this shall be attended with the resurrection from the dead, and the change of those *who being found alive, shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air*; and elsewhere he says, *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*, 1 Cor. xv. 52. and our Saviour speaks of a throne's being erected; and that *when he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, he shall sit on the throne of his glory*, Matt. xxv. 31, 32. We also read of the gathering of the whole world before him, and the separation of the righteous from the wicked, which is said to be done by the ministry of angels, chap. xxiv. 31. and chap. xix. 28. these things will immediately go before Christ's judging the world: but since it is expressly said, in this answer, that he shall come with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God, this we shall particularly consider. And,

1. When he is said to come with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, it does not seem probable, that by a shout, is meant an articulate sound, as the word is sometimes applied, when used by us, as signifying that joy and triumph which is expressed by those who shout for victory. Notwithstanding the word may be understood in a metaphorical sense, signifying some triumphant expressions of joy, suitable to the great occasions; or the word,\* which we render a shout, may signify the powerful word of command given by our Saviour, whereby the dead are called out of their graves; and agreeable hereunto, it is added, that Christ shall come with the voice of the arch-angel. This has given occasion, to some, to enquire, whether there be one among the angels who is called so, as

\* Κελευσμα.

being the prince and chief of all the rest, who will receive the word immediately from Christ, and transmit it to other angels, whereby the world will be summoned to appear before his tribunal; but it is very difficult for us to account for this matter. That there is a very beautiful order and harmony among the angels, is beyond dispute; nevertheless, we have no ground to assert, that one is superior to the rest, unless that be the meaning of the word arch-angel, in this, and two or three other scriptures, in which we meet with it. But, though I will not contend with those who are otherwise minded, yet I am rather inclined to think that the word is always applied to our Saviour, and that he is called the arch-angel, as he is the head and sovereign of all the angels, who, as the apostle says, *were created by him, and for him*, Col. i. 16. and who are commanded to *worship him*, Heb. i. 6. and, as it is said elsewhere, *Angels, authorities, and powers, are made subject unto him*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. therefore he certainly has a greater right to this glorious character than any creature.

If to this it be objected, that Christ's being said to come with the voice of the arch-angel, denotes, that the arch-angel is distinguished from him; to this it may be replied, that this does not necessarily follow from hence; for the meaning of the words may be this, that the Lord shall descend with a shout, or powerful word of command, given forth by him, who is the prince and Lord of all the angels, and transmitted by them to the whole world, who shall be hereby summoned to appear before him.

2. He is said to come with the sound of a trumpet; which seems to allude to the use of trumpets, to gather the hosts of Israel together, when they were to march by their armies, or in the day of their solemn festivals, and in the year of Jubilee, which was proclaimed thereby; and accordingly this eternal Jubilee, and triumph of the saints, is said to begin with the sound of a trumpet; not that there shall be a material trumpet, like those in use among us, as some, who have low apprehensions of the glory of this day, have supposed, as though there were nothing figurative in the mode of speaking; whereas the principal thing intended thereby is, that there shall be some glorious ensigns of the divine majesty, or the effects of his power, which shall fill his saints with exceeding great joy, and his enemies with terror, and shall be a signal to all to appear before his tribunal. This is all we need to determine concerning it; though I will not altogether deny the literal sense of the words, provided they be understood in the same manner, as when God appeared from mount Sinai, *with the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud*, Exod. xix. 16. it is not improbable that there will be a sound like that of a trumpet formed in the air, by the imme-

mediate power of God, which shall be heard throughout the whole world, which will be an intimation to all, that the great Judge of quick and dead is at hand, and will be a branch of that external glory, with which he shall appear.

We might here have proceeded to consider Christ as seated on his throne, and the glorious work that he shall be engaged in, in judging the world in righteousness, which is the last thing mentioned in this answer: but, since we are led particularly to insist on that subject, and to speak concerning the persons to be judged, as set at Christ's right or left hand, together with the manner of proceeding in that day; the sentence passed, and the final estate of angels and men determined thereby, together with the consequence thereof, both to the righteous and wicked, in some following answers,\* we shall proceed to speak concerning the application of redemption, or the benefits procured by Christ's mediation.

**QUEST. LVII.** *What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?*

**ANSW.** Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the covenant of grace.

**QUEST. LVIII.** *How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?*

**ANSW.** We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them unto us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

**QUEST. LIX.** *Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?*

**ANSW.** Redemption is certainly applied and effectually communicated to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it, who are, in time, by the Holy Ghost, enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel.

**I.** **I**N the first of these answers, we have an account of the blessings, which Christ, as Mediator, has procured for his people, namely, redemption, with all the other blessings of the covenant of grace; and accordingly we may observe, that the covenant of grace is the foundation of all the blessings that we enjoy, or hope for; and, among these, redemption is included, which having been before considered, we need not, at present enlarge on it.

\* See *Quest. LXXXVIII.—XC.*



As for those other benefits of the covenant of grace, which are the consequents of our redemption, they differ from it, in that redemption is said to be wrought out for us by Christ, in his own Person, whereas some other benefits we enjoy, are, more especially considered as wrought in us; and these are particularly mentioned in several following answers; which treat of effectual calling, sanctification, repentance unto life, and other graces, which are inherent in us, whereby our hearts and actions are changed and conformed to the will of God. And there are other blessings which, more especially, respect our state God-ward; such as justification, in which our sins are pardoned, and our persons accepted; and adoption, wherein we are made and dealt with as God's children; and there are several other benefits which follow hereupon, whereby the work of grace is carried on, and we enabled to go on in the ways of God, with spiritual peace and joy in believing, till we come to glory.

II. It is farther observed, that we are made partakers of these benefits by the application thereof to us; first, they are purchased, and then applied. We are first redeemed by price, and then delivered by the almighty power of God, and the application hereof is said to be more especially the work of the Holy Ghost; whereas the purchase of it only belongs to the Mediator.

In considering the application of redemption, we may observe, that it is a divine work, and therefore not to be ascribed to ourselves, but it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. and, as it is a work appropriate to God, so it is, in several scriptures, said to be wrought in us by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly we are said to *be born of the Spirit*, John iii. 5. and *saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Titus iii. 5. upon which account, the Spirit is sometimes called the Spirit of holiness, and power, and he is said to dwell in us; which plainly shews that he is eminently glorified in the application of redemption.

But inasmuch as it is said, in one of the answers we are explaining, that this is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost, which is a mode of speaking often used by those who treat on this subject; this is to be considered with great caution; and therefore when we speak of it, as the work especially of God the Holy Ghost, we are not to understand it as though the Father and the Son were not equally concerned therein; for it is allowed by all, who have just ideas of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, that those works, in which any of the divine perfections are displayed, belong equally, and alike, to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; \* therefore when the appli-

\* Thus divines generally say, Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa.

cation of redemption is said, more especially, to belong to the Holy Ghost, we are to understand nothing else by it, but that this work is peculiarly attributed to the Spirit, inasmuch as hereby he demonstrates his Personal glory, in the subserviency of the work performed by him, to the glory of the Father, and of Christ the Mediator : but this we shall pass over, having insisted on it elsewhere.\*

III. We are now to consider redemption as certainly and effectually applied to all, for whom it was purchased, together with the character of the persons who are interested therein. In this account of the application thereof, there is something supposed, namely, that it is not applied to all mankind. This every one will allow ; for even they, who plead for universal redemption, do not assert the universal application of it, or that all mankind shall be eventually saved, as being contrary to the whole tenor of scripture ; therefore we must conclude, that it is applied to none but those for whom Christ has purchased it. This is evident, because the design of the purchase thereof was, that they, who were redeemed, might reap the benefit of it. And, in this sense, it is farther observed, that it is *certainly* and *effectually* applied to them ; from whence it follows, that the application thereof does not depend on the will of man, or on some uncertain conditions, which God expects we shall perform, that so the death of Christ might be rendered effectual ; for whatever condition can be assigned, as conducive hereunto, it is the purchase of Christ's death ; in which respect, the Spirit's applying one saving benefit, must be considered as a condition of his applying another ; which is not only an improper sense of the word *condition*, but it contains several things derogatory to the divine glory : but this need not be farther insisted on, since we have had occasion to speak of it elsewhere.†

This leads us to consider the character of the persons to whom redemption is applied. These are described as such, who are enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel. This is a very extensive character belonging to those who are interested in Christ's redemption, as it includes in it all other graces, which accompany or flow from saving faith ; and we are not, by nature, disposed to believe in Christ, but are rather averse to it ; therefore it is farther said, that we are *enabled* to believe in him, as will be considered under a following answer.‡ And this is said to be done according to the gospel, and it not only discovers to us the object of faith ; but contains many invaluable promises of this and other graces, that accompany salvation. And this grace of faith is farther said to be wrought in time, to denote, that though the purpose relating hereunto was from eternity, and the purchase thereof was made before we

\* See Vol. I. page 291, 292. † See page 185, 187, 322, 324. ‡ See Quest. lxxij.

had a being, yet the application of it is in God's appointed time, when, after having run great lengths in impenitency and unbelief, he is pleased to call us by his grace, and thereby bring us into the way of salvation.

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QUEST. LX. *Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved, by their living according to the light of nature?*

ANSW. They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the church.

**T**HIS answer is an inference deduced from the foregoing; for, if redemption be only applied to those who are enabled to believe in Christ, according to the gospel, then it follows, that they who have not the gospel, cannot be made partakers of this privilege; and the general scope and design thereof is to assert the necessity of divine revelation, as well as faith in Christ, against those who suppose that the gate of salvation is much wider than our Saviour has determined it to be, who says, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*, Matt. vii. 14. I am sensible that this doctrine cannot but be disrelished by them, who are disposed to exclude any from a possibility of attaining salvation; and are ready to charge those with groundless censoriousness, and want of Christian temper, who pass so severe a sentence on so great a part of mankind, as are included in it. It is also contrary to the presumptuous hope of corrupt nature, which is unwarrantably prone to expect salvation, without faith in Christ. This some defend by arguments, but many more seem to do it by their practice.

They who maintain the doctrine of universal redemption, design hereby to advance the goodness of God, and are ready to conclude, that it is inconsistent with that divine perfection to exclude any from a possibility of salvation; and therefore it is not agreeable to their method of reasoning, to confine the means of grace to so small a number, as that of those to whom the gospel is preached; accordingly many of them have asserted, that the Heathen, as well as Christians, are put into a salvable state by the death of Christ, so that they shall be saved if they live according to the dictates of the light of nature, though they know nothing of Christ and the gospel. But, in



order to their maintaining this argument, they have some great difficulties to surmount, inasmuch as, while they attempt to aggrandize the mercy of God, they seem to overthrow the necessity of divine revelation, as well as run counter to the sense of many scriptures.

Therefore some who have asserted universal redemption, have not extended the universality of it any farther, than to those who are favoured with the gospel; but either leave it, as a matter which we know nothing of, and ought not to enquire into, or else they seem to suggest, that the dark traditional knowledge of the gospel, which they suppose, some of the Heathen have had, was sufficient to lead them to a small degree of faith in Christ; or, since that cannot well be defended, others have supposed, that God may lead many of the Heathen into the knowledge of Christ, before they go out of the world, by some secret methods, not to be discerned by us. These are not willing, with the Deists, to set aside the necessity of divine revelation; whereas others, who do not suppose it necessary to salvation, but only to our farther improvement in the way thereunto, and therefore conclude, that Christianity is only a brighter, or clearer way to heaven; these are, more especially, opposed in this answer we are explaining.

I am sensible that this subject, we are entering on, has been treated with more reflection and censure than many others; and we are hereby supposed to conclude, that the divine dispensations are too severe, and that that goodness and mercy, which is his nature and delight, is not sufficiently advanced and magnified; and that it is a sour and ill-natured way of reasoning, to suppose that any are put under a necessity of perishing, for want of a divine revelation, and that it does not become us to pass a damnatory sentence on any, more especially on so great a part of the world, as that is, who know nothing of Christ, and the way of salvation by him. It is necessary for us therefore to premise,

1. That we pretend not to pass a judgment concerning the final state of particular persons, by concluding, that they, who are now strangers to Christ, and his gospel, shall always remain so; for we know not when, to whom, or by what means, God may reveal Christ, to those who now sit in darkness, and are unacquainted with the way of salvation by him. And as for the possibility of God's revealing Christ, in a secret way, to those who do not sit under the sound of the gospel, we will not deny it; however, we cannot infer the certainty of events, from the possibility thereof, and therefore we must have a clearer proof hereof, before we can believe it.

2. God might justly have excluded the whole race of mankind from a possibility of attaining salvation, as well as the fall-

on angels ; for there was nothing out of himself that moved him to have compassion on those who are the heirs of salvation, any more than others.

3. We are far from supposing that the Heathens shall be condemned for not believing in Christ, whom they never heard of, or not complying with the gospel-overture, which was never made to them. Invincible ignorance, though it be an unhappiness, and a consequence of our fallen state, is not a crime ; therefore,

4. The Heathen shall be judged by the law of nature ; and, if the apostle's words, *As many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*, Rom. ii. 12. be applicable to them, which, I think, no one will deny ; yet their condemnation cannot be equal to that of those, who neglect and despise the great salvation offered to them in the gospel.

5. The Heathen, who have had no other light but that of of nature, cannot be exculpated from the charge of many actual sins committed by them ; in which respect they have rebelled against the light they have been favoured with. All of them, indeed, have not contracted the same degree of guilt with those whom the apostle describes, who committed sins contrary to nature, *being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, covetousness, maliciousness, wickedness*, chap. i. 25, 26. & seq. and many other sins of the blackest nature, and therefore all of them are not liable to the same condemnation. And, indeed, some of the Heathen moralists have been a blessing, in many respects, to the age in which they lived, who, by their writings and example, have endeavoured to reform it from vice and immorality ; and it is certain, that they shall not be punished for crimes which they have not committed : but whether the best of them shall be saved by the merits of Christ, though destitute of faith in him, is the question under our present consideration. To conclude that their good works have merited salvation, is not only contrary to the analogy of faith, but it is more than what can be said concerning the best works that were ever performed by Christians ; and to argue, as many do, from the goodness of God, that they shall be saved, is certainly an inconclusive way of reasoning, unless we had some intimation of his purpose relating thereunto. If God has determined so to do, we must have recourse to his revealed will, and prove, from scripture, that there are promises of eternal life made to those who have no interest in Christ, and some ground, at least, to conclude, that some shall be happy in beholding his glory in another world, who have had no communion, by faith, with him in this. These things must first be proved, before we can see reason to deny what is contained in this answer, which we proceed to consider. Accordingly it is observed,

I. That they who never heard the gospel, and neither know nor believe in Christ, cannot be saved. This supposes, that faith and salvation are inseparably connected; and, though it be particularly applied to those who are destitute of the gospel; yet it is levelled against all, who presumptuously expect salvation, without ground, who remain in a state of unbelief and impenitency, whether they have the means of grace or no. And here let us consider that many who are called Christians, though they know little more than the bare name of Christ, yet they doubt not but that they shall be saved by his merits, and so live and die in this fatal mistake, how vile soever their conversation has been, as the prophet Isaiah says, *Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope*, Isa. lvii. 10. or like the person whom Moses speaks of, who, *when he heareth the words of this curse, yet blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst*, Deut. xxix. 19. It is too notorious to be denied, that a great part of men though grossly ignorant, and openly profane, who live without God in the world, notwithstanding, expect to be saved; and it is one of Satan's great engines, by which he endeavours to banish all religion out of the world, by persuading his deluded subjects that all things shall go well with them, though they make no pretensions to it. This presumption is rather founded in stupidity, than supported by arguments, and is a great instance of the alienation of the mind and affections from God, and shows how deceitful and desperately wicked, the heart of man is, when destitute of divine grace.

But what shall we say of those who pretend to defend this, and thereby put a sword into the hands of those who adhere to them, to destroy themselves? This the Deists do. And, inasmuch as their method of reasoning is subversive of the Christian religion, and of faith in Christ, as connected with salvation, I cannot omit to mention it in this place. These pretend not to be Atheists, though they express not a due veneration for the divine Majesty, that they may not be excluded from the society of mankind, who have some degree of abhorrence of Atheism impressed on their nature. They talk, indeed of God, and of natural religion, but make revealed the subject of their scorn and ridicule. If they read the scriptures, it is apparently with a design to burlesque them, and charge them with inconsistency and self-contradiction. When they speak of revelation, or the gift of prophecy, they give it no better a term than *enthusiasm*; and, when they mention the failings, recorded in scripture, of those who were otherwise holy and excellent men, they take occasion maliciously to reproach them, and insinuate, that they were vile persons, guilty of the most enorm-



inous crimes; and yet were saved: and wickedly infer from thence, that there is nothing solid and substantial in religion, but that persons may be as safe and happy without it, as with it. If they refer to the brightest and most excellent part of the character of the saints recorded in scripture, this they suppose to be the effect of implicit faith, and to take its rise from priestcraft. And our Saviour himself is not only divested by them of his glory, but reckoned, as, they suppose, Moses was of old, a designing person, who brought a new set of notions into the world to amuse and confound it. As for his miracles, which none but the blinded Jews, and they who are equally prejudiced against Christianity, never pretended to contest, much less to vilify, these they treat with the utmost scorn and contempt, as a late writer has done, whose blasphemy has been made manifest, by those who have wrote in defence of this part of our religion.

But inasmuch as persons, who are not disposed to indulge so great a degree of profaneness, have been sensible that this is not a right method to extirpate Christianity, since it cannot but be treated with the utmost abhorrence, by those who read the scripture with any religious design; there are others who, though they speak of God, yet glorify him not as God. These will, indeed, allow him to have some divine perfections; but they cast a reproach on his providence, and suppose, that he is too great to be affected with, or concerned about the actions and behaviour of so mean a creature as man. And as what we call sin, can be no disparagement to his glory, so he is too good and pitiful to his creatures, to punish them, at least, with eternal torments for it; so that if they allow the soul to be immortal, and capable of happiness in another world, which all of them, without exception, do not; yet they suppose that God made no creature to be for ever miserable. And as for those laws which he has given to mankind, which are enstamped on their nature, and contain nothing but what might have been known without revelation, these they pretend to be designed only to keep the world in order, to promote the interest of civil society, to prevent men from murdering one another, disturbing the tranquillity of the government in which they live, or invading the property of others; which is not doing as they would have others do to them. And as for the punishment of sin; that is no farther to be regarded, than as vice and immorality render persons obnoxious to bodily diseases, some marks of infamy, which custom has annexed thereunto, or the lash of human laws. This is all the scheme of religion, that some among the Deists endeavour to propagate; and every thing that is built more immediately upon divine revelation, they not only reckon unnecessary, but enthusiastic, and no other than a con-

trivance of some, who, with a view to their own interest, endeavour to puzzle the world with mysterious doctrines, which neither they, nor their votaries understand.

It must be supposed, that these men do not think that the knowledge of Christ, or faith in him, is necessary to salvation; yet they doubt not but that it shall go well with them in another world, if there be a future state, which, through the influence of that scepticism, which is, for the most part, a concomitant of Deism, they sometimes question. We shall not make so great a digression from our present subject as to give a particular reply to these assertions, which, though propagated with much assurance, are not pretended to be defended by solid arguments; and, indeed, the whole gospel is a reply to it. Whatever doctrine thereof is maintained by Christians, it will have a tendency to give them an abhorrence of it, and confirm their faith against such attempts, as are used to stagger and pervert it.

Thus concerning the methods that are used, by some, to overthrow revealed religion, and the necessity of faith in Christ to salvation. We shall now proceed to consider on what grounds persons hope to be saved, without the knowledge of Christ, or faith in him. And,

1. Some have no other ground of hope but the goodness of the divine nature; and accordingly they think, that because God delights not in the misery of any of his creatures, but takes all occasions to make himself known, as a God of infinite kindness and compassion, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, and will not resent those injuries which we may offer to him, but will lay them under eternal obligations to him, who have, by their sins rendered themselves unworthy to be saved by him; therefore they hope that all things shall go well with them, though they are utter strangers to the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and are altogether destitute of faith in him.

But this we cannot call any other than a presumptuous confidence; it is nothing else but to abuse the riches of God's goodness, and to claim an interest in it, without ground. It is, indeed, a very great truth that God delights in mercy; and that this attribute cannot be too much admired or advanced by us; but yet it must not be set in opposition to any of his other perfections. He is certainly a just and holy, as well as a merciful God; and therefore we are not to suppose that one of these perfections shall be glorified, to the dishonour of another. Might not fallen angels as well make use of the same argument, and say, that because God is merciful, therefore he will deliver them from those chains of darkness and misery, in which they are held; as that the mercy of God should be presumed to be

a foundation of hope, to those who have no ground to conclude their interest in it, as expecting it another way, than that in which he has declared his will to glorify it? And it is certain, that whomsoever God designs to glorify his mercy in saving, he first determines to advance the glory thereof, in making them meet for salvation, by sanctifying or purifying their hearts by faith. To separate these two, is therefore a dishonour to the divine perfections: God never designed to save his people in sin, but first to save them from it, and then to crown the work, which he had begun, with complete blessedness. Therefore the man who lives in all excess of riot, and yet hopes for salvation, must be guilty of a groundless presumption. When we read, in scripture, of God's extending mercy, we find that there are certain marks and characters annexed, of those persons who have ground to lay claim to an interest in it: thus it is said, *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy*, Psal. ciii. 8. but then it is added, that this mercy is *from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them*, ver. 17, 18. and elsewhere the Psalmist admires the goodness of God, (which is, doubtless, beyond expression wonderful) when he says, *O how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up, and wrought*, in which he speaks of the present displays of goodness, and the future reserves thereof; but it follows, that this belongs only to *them that fear him, and to them that trust in him before the sons of men*, Psal. xxxi. 19. and elsewhere it is said, *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies*, Psal. xxv. 10. that is, to them, exclusively of all others.

Moreover, we never read of God's glorifying his mercy but in Christ; first, in bringing sinners nigh to him, by his blood, and then in applying redemption purchased by his Spirit: thus the apostle says, *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, 2 Cor. v. 19. and then he adds, as an expedient to give sinners a ground of hope, that they have an interest in this privilege, that, in the gospel, he sends an embassy to them, to beseech them, as they value their own souls, to be reconciled to God, by complying with the gospel-overture, and repenting of, and desisting from their rebellion against him. And, when he is represented as *the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort*, he is, at the same time, styled, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, chap. i. 3. to denote, that this mercy is displayed in and through a Mediator; and therefore our hope of attaining it, must be founded in our interest in him, which cannot be considered otherwise, than as including in it the grace of faith. Are they, who have a right to expect salvation, *called heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*? Rom. viii. 17. They



are farther described, as *conformed to his image*, ver. 29. Have they a right to the *inheritance of the saints in light*? they are characterized as made *meet for it*, Colos. i. 12. and when the apostle exhorts persons to *look for the mercy of God unto eternal life*, he intimates that this would be a presumptuous expectation, were it separate from their *keeping themselves in the love of God*, Jude, ver. 21.

2. Others have no foundation for their expectation of salvation, but by extenuating sin; and are hardly persuaded to confess themselves to be sinners, how vile soever their conversation be: thus it is said, concerning Ephraim, *The balances of deceit are in his hand, he loveth to oppress*; yet he refused to acknowledge this, and says, *In all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin*, Hos. xii. 7, 8. and, when the prophet Jeremiah exhibits a charge against a degenerate age, and tells them, *Thou hast taught the wicked ones thy ways, also in thy skirts is found the blood of poor innocents*; what abominable stupidity were they guilty of, when they reply to this, *Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me*, Jer. ii. 33—35.

Sometimes they build their hope of salvation, though they cannot exculpate themselves from the charge of sin, on the bare supposition, that some others are greater sinners than themselves: thus the Pharisee pleases himself, that he was not guilty of some notorious sins: that he was no *extortioner*, or *adulterer*, nor even as the *Publican*, whom he looks upon with great contempt, Luke xviii. 11. or if they are forced to conclude themselves to be among the number of the vilest and most notorious sinners, yet they presume that God will not punish them eternally for this, but will make some allowance for the propensity of human nature to sin, or the force of those temptations, which they have not been able to withstand; or, if they are liable to any extraordinary afflictions in this life, they suppose that these are sufficient to compensate for all the sins that they have committed, and therefore their miseries shall not be extended beyond it; so that, that which lies at the root of this presumptuous hope, is a secret denial of the infinite demerit of sin, or that it deserves eternal punishment. Now, that we may shew the vanity of that expectation, which has no other foundation than this, let us consider,

(1.) That to extenuate sin, is an argument that persons are unacquainted with themselves, know not the plague of their own hearts; and therefore it is the most destructive fallacy that men can put on themselves; and it is a sad token that they are given up to judicial blindness: but, when God shall charge sin on the conscience, or, as the Psalmist speaks, *reprove them*, and *set their iniquities in order before their eyes*, Psal. l. 21. which

he will do, at one time or other, they shall appear to have been self-deceived, and the ground of their hope of salvation, sink under them.

(2.) To suppose that sin does not deserve eternal punishment, is an affront to the holiness of God and a disbelief of those threatenings which are denounced against it. It is, in effect, to deny that sin is objectively infinite, which cannot be done, without denying, in effect, that God is a God of infinite perfection; it is a flying in the face of his justice, and charging him with mal-administration; to such it may be said, as Elihu says to Job, *Wilt thou condemn him that is most just?* Job xxxiv. 17. or, as God speaks, to reprove and humble him, *Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?* chap. xl. 8. But since the eternity of the punishment of sin is particularly insisted on, under a following answer,\* we shall add no more on that head at present; only let it be considered, that this method of reasoning has a tendency to banish all religion out of the world; and it is never made use of, but by those who make no pretensions to it.

3. If it be reckoned preposterous for any one to found his hope of salvation on the extenuating of his sins, others have a more plausible pretence, when they expect to be saved, because they perform some works that are materially good, though these are not only destitute of the grace of faith, but strangers to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. If they perform some moral duties, or abstain from some gross enormities, much more if they have a form of godliness, and are reckoned to be religious persons by the world, and, in many instances, are useful to those with whom they converse, they are ready to conclude, that they do, as it were, merit eternal life thereby, and God, for this, becomes a debtor to them; the former sort above-mentioned have too light thoughts of sin; these set too great a value on their duties, which is contrary to what our Saviour says, *When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants,* Luke xvii. 10. I would not have it thought that hereby I design to depreciate any moral duties, or virtues, which have in them a degree or excellency, in proportion to their nature: but the only thing that I intend hereby is, that good works which do not proceed from a right principle, and are not performed for right ends, if there be not an internal principle of grace implanted in regeneration, nor faith in Christ, as the main spring thereof, or, if they be put in the room of Christ's righteousness, and so made the foundation of our justification, or right to eternal life, they are not accepted by God; and that hope of salvation, which is founded thereon, is vain, and unwarrantable.

\* See Quest. LXXIX.

4. There are others, who, as it is expressed in this answer, frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the law of that religion which they profess, and doubt not, but in so doing, they shall be saved. This presumption is defended by many, who call themselves Christians, who suppose, that a person may be saved in any religion, whether true or false: these do not stick to say, that, if they lived at Rome, they would embrace the Popish doctrines; or, if in Turkey, they would profess the Mahometan faith; or, had they been born in India, among the Pagans, they should have ground to conclude that they are in a safe way to heaven. This opinion certainly reflects dishonour on the Christian name; and it savours so much of scepticism, that these must be supposed to conclude, that there is nothing certain in religion; or, as to the different modes thereof, that these are only a political engine, a mere human invention, which stands upon no other basis, but tradition, and has nothing else to propagate it, but implicit faith. This is the notion which they, who set themselves against divine revelation, entertain concerning religion in general; or, if there be any thing in it that escapes their reproach and censure, it is only such maxims as are founded in the laws of nature, *viz.* that we ought to do to others as we would have them do to us, govern our passions, that they may not be outrageous, and disturb not only our own peace, but that of all civil societies; and that we must not offer injuries, or violence, to those whom we converse with; but rather be gentle, good-humoured, kind, and compassionate to them, and abstain from those enormities, which are abhorrent to nature. This they suppose to be sufficient to denominate any one a good man, who need not entertain any doubt of his own salvation: but this is to set aside all revelation, and disbelieve the demonstrative evidence which we have of the truth of the Christian religion, and it is to cast contempt on that, as unnecessary, which has in it the greatest excellency. It also contains a denial of that which is experienced by all true believers, namely, that revealed religion has the greatest tendency to dispose them to glorify God, and to do good to men; these sensibly find, that they have the greatest comfort, and most solid ground of hope, in a firm adherence thereunto: and laying all the stress of their salvation on what is revealed in the gospel; and desiring to adhere stedfastly, by faith, to Christ, as the only way of salvation.

II. It is farther observed, in this answer, that there is salvation in no other but in Christ. The scripture is very full and express to this purpose; Thus it is said, *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12.* and elsewhere the apostle says, *Other foundation can no man lay,*



than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. iii. 11. On him the church is built; he is the only Mediator between God and man, the only Redeemer, who purchased salvation for those who shall be made partakers of it: He laid the foundation-stone of this glorious fabric, and therefore we must conclude, that the carrying on of this work belongs to him, till the top-stone is laid, and the work brought to perfection; upon which account he is styled, *The Author and Finisher of faith*, Heb. xii. 3. Accordingly we may observe,

1. That faith, and all other graces that accompany salvation, have a peculiar reference to Christ: Thus we are said to *obtain precious faith through his righteousness*, 2 Pet. i. 1. and he is said to *dwell in the hearts* of his people *by faith*, Eph. iii. 17, and to *increase their faith*, Luke xvii. 5. and he is also the Object of faith, as he says, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*, John xiv. 1. and this grace is frequently described as *a coming to him*, chap. vi. 35. and it is such a coming as implies more than an attendance on his ordinances; for it is connected with salvation, which is the meaning of that metaphorical expression, in which it is said, that such *shall never hunger nor thirst*; by which we are to understand that all their desires shall be fulfilled, and they shall be satisfied with that perfect blessedness, which he will make them partakers of. Besides, it is such a coming to Christ, as is the effect of God's almighty power; therefore he says, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him*, ver. 44.

This will farther appear, if we consider that salvation is founded on Christ's executing his three offices of Priest, Prophet, and King. The first of these he executes in our behalf; not in us, but for us, whereby faith, and all other graces, are purchased; whereas, in the execution of his other two offices, namely, his Prophetical and Kingly, especially when it is rendered effectual to salvation, his people are the subjects in whom they are executed; the work performed is internal, and the consequence of it is the soul's giving that glory to him, that is the result thereof; and this cannot be done, without our knowing him to be a Mediator, and, as such, ordained and qualified to execute them. This cannot be known without divine revelation.

Moreover, this is evident, from the apostle's method of reasoning, in which he considers our *calling on the name of the Lord* as inseparably connected with salvation, and necessary thereunto, and that this proceeds from faith; for, says he, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed?* Rom. x. 14. And this faith supposes the preaching of the gospel, which gospel is represented, in many scriptures, as a display of the glory of Christ; therefore it follows, that there is no sal-

vation without divine revelation; or that they, who never heard of Christ, and consequently never believed in him, have no right or claim to it.

We might also observe the account which the same apostle gives of that worship, which is necessary to salvation, when he says, *Through him we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father*, Eph. ii. 18. To have access to God, is certainly necessary to salvation; and this is by a Mediator, which is elsewhere called, *Coming to God by him*: But this cannot be done without the knowledge of him, as the way to the Father, and that faith in him, which is founded thereon. Moreover, salvation is to be considered as a promised blessing, founded in the covenant of grace, and therefore they, who are strangers to this covenant, have no right to lay claim to the promises thereof, which are no where contained but in divine revelation, and accordingly they are said to be *yea and amen in Christ, to the glory of God*; 2 Cor. i. 20. Therefore, what hope can there be of obtaining these promised blessings, without the knowledge of Christ?

2. It farther appears, that there is no salvation without faith in Christ, as founded in divine revelation, inasmuch as there is no justification without it. Justification is inseparably connected with salvation by the apostle, when he says, *Whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. viii. 30. To separate these two, is to suppose, that a person may expect salvation, without being delivered from the guilt of sin, and the condemning sentence of the law; or to have a right to eternal life, without being able to plead any righteousness that is worthy of God's acceptance, which is certainly to build our hope on a sandy foundation, and is contrary to those scriptures that set forth the impossibility of our being justified by the works of the law, or the necessity of faith in Christ's righteousness, in order to our claiming this privilege. This the apostle Paul frequently inculcates; therefore it follows, that no one can plead any thing done by him, as the matter of his justification, though he could say, as that apostle did, *touching the righteousness that is in the law, I am blameless*, Phil. iii. 6. and elsewhere he says, *Though I know nothing by myself, yet I am not hereby justified*, 1 Cor. iv. 4. If the best saint in the world must have something, to support his expectation of being discharged from condemnation, that is infinitely more valuable than any act of his own obedience; then certainly that obedience, which is performed, according to the dictates of the light of nature, without divine revelation, is far from being a sufficient foundation to support a person's hope of justification and salvation: But such who are destitute of the gospel, have nothing else to plead; therefore we must conclude, as it is expressed in this answer, that they, who never heard the gospel, and believe not in Christ, cannot be saved.

3. This may be also inferred, from those scriptures that set forth the pernicious consequence of unbelief, as it is said, *He that believes not is condemned already, and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him*, John iii. 18, 36. and elsewhere, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*, chap. viii. 24. And inasmuch as faith is founded on divine revelation, there are other scriptures that represent those who are destitute of it, as being in an hopeless state: thus the apostle tells the church at Ephesus, that *when they were Gentiles*, and consequently strangers to the gospel, *they had no hope, being without God in the world*, Eph. ii. 12. so that, whatever knowledge they had of a God by the light of nature, or whatever blessings they received from common providence, they had not such a knowledge of him, nor such an interest in him, as gave them hope of salvation. The apostle does not speak of them as being in an hopeless state, because their conversation had been more vile than that of other Gentiles, as acting contrary to the dictates of the law of nature; but he speaks of them as Gentiles, that is, without the light of divine revelation; and therefore what he says, concerning them is applicable to all the Heathen, as such.\*

Again, it is farther observed, in scripture, that, before Christ was preached to the Gentiles, they were not the objects of his special care and goodness, but, in this respect, neglected by him; accordingly it is said, that, *in times past he suffered all nations to walk in their own ways*, Acts xiv. 16. and elsewhere these are called, *Times of ignorance*, which, it is said, *God winked at*, chap. xvii. 30. as it is in our translation: but this is not so agreeable to the sense of the Greek word,† as if we rendered it, during the times of this ignorance, God having overlooked them, that is, the Gentiles, *hath now commanded all men every where to repent*; and, if they were disregarded by him, they could not be supposed to be the objects of his special grace, or to have a right and title to salvation.

Moreover, the apostle Paul, when speaking of some among the Heathen, who excelled others in wisdom; notwithstanding being destitute of gospel light, he casts the utmost contempt on those attainments in the knowledge of divine things, which they gloried in, as being insufficient to salvation; and therefore he says, that whatever they knew of the perfections of the divine nature, so far as they may be known without divine revelation, yet *by wisdom they knew not God*; and therefore he says, *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* 1 Cor. i. 20.

\* It is a rule in logic, A quatenus ad omne valet consequentia.

† *utipiam.*



*Object. 1.* It is objected, that it is contrary to the goodness of God to condemn persons for invincible ignorance, as that of the Heathen must be supposed to be, since it was impossible for them to know the way of salvation by a Redeemer.

*Answ.* To this it may be replied, that we must distinguish between God's condemning persons for not knowing the gospel, which is to condemn them for invincible ignorance, and his not giving the gospel to a greater part of the world, (as a necessary means of grace and salvation) whom he designed, as we before observed, to overlook, and suffer to walk in their own way. If the goodness of God had laid a natural obligation on him, without an act of his sovereign will, to bestow the means of grace, or the knowledge of the way of salvation on them, then it would have been contrary to his divine perfections to have denied the gospel to any, and so to condemn them who are ignorant thereof. It is one thing for God to leave them in their fallen state, the result whereof would be their not knowing the way of salvation; and another thing for him to condemn them for this, as though there were no other reason obliging him to inflict this righteous judgment on them.

*Object. 2.* It is farther objected, that the apostle says, in Rom. i. 19. *That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewn it unto them;* and, in chap. ii. 14, 15. *When the Gentiles which have not the law, that is, any other law than that of nature, do, by nature the things contained in the law; these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.* From hence it is argued, that the Gentiles have sufficient knowledge of the divine law, to bring them into a state of salvation; their consciences are said to *excuse them*, that is, not to charge guilt upon them; therefore they are justified by walking according to the dictates of the light of nature.

*Answ. 1.* As to what the apostle said, in the former of these scriptures, that *that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, or shewed to them;* he does not speak of those things which are to be known of God, that have an immediate reference to salvation; nor does he say, that every thing necessary to be known of him, in order thereunto, is manifest in them; but, *that of God which is known by them,\** is from him as the God of nature, *he has shewn it to them*, that is, he has given them sufficient light to discover his *eternal power and Godhead*, in a way of reasoning *from the things that are made*, as he adds, in the following words; but the eternal power and God-

head may be known by those who are destitute of that knowledge, which is necessary to salvation.

2. As to the other scripture, mentioned in the objection, in which *the Gentiles* are said to *do by nature the things contained in the law*; he does not infer from thence that they are the servants of God, or willing subjects to his government, or, indeed, that they fulfil the law of nature; and therefore we cannot suppose that he concludes them justified thereby, which is contrary to the whole tenor of the apostle's doctrine, in other parts of his writings. It is true, he says, that *their consciences sometimes excuse*, as well as, at other times, *accuse them*; yet it must be considered, that conscience may excuse, or plead not guilty, with respect to the charge of some crimes, which are committed by others, when, at the same time, this does not exempt them from the guilt of sin in general, or give them a right and title to eternal life. The apostle therefore designs only to shew how far the corruption of men may be restrained, by their attending to the dictates of the light of nature, whereby a great deal of sin and guilt might be prevented: but he does not determine that God has any farther design of grace toward them; for, if he had, he would have given them the means of salvation; and if he has not said that he will save them, without giving them these means, we have no ground to assert that he will; for this is to conclude, without sufficient evidence from scripture.

*Object. 3.* It is said, in Rom. ii. 4. that *the goodness of God leadeth to repentance*; but repentance is certainly connected with salvation; therefore the goodness, or bounty of God, which persons, who have no other right but that of nature, have some knowledge of, may lead them to salvation.

*Ans.* It is evident that the apostle, in this scripture, does not speak to the Gentiles, but to the Jews; for, having considered the vile abominations which were practised by the Gentiles, in the foregoing chapter, in this he reproves the Jews, when he says, in ver. 1. *Thou art inexcusable, O man, that judgest, and yet dost the same things*; and, in ver. 17. *Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God*; therefore, if the apostle is speaking to them, when he says, *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance*, we are not only to understand hereby the bounty of common providence, or those effects of the divine goodness, which are known and experienced by the whole world; but the goodness of God, which they had experienced, who were the peculiar objects thereof, and favoured by him, above all the rest of the world, to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, and the giving the law, and the service of God, and the promises, as

we read, in chap. ix. 4. therefore certainly they were highly to blame, that they were not hereby led to repentance.

*Object.* 4. It is farther objected, that the apostle, in disputing with the Athenians, in Acts xvii. 27. put them upon *seeking after God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him*; whereas, if it were impossible to find God, that is, the way of acceptance in his sight, by the light of nature, it would have been a preposterous thing for the apostle to have put them upon seeking him; therefore it follows, that they are not destitute of all means of grace, or without a possibility of salvation.

*Ans.* To this it may be replied, that, if by *seeking the Lord*, the apostle means enquiring into the way of salvation by a Redeemer, and pressing after faith in him; as it is said, *Seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you*, Matt. vii. 7. and, *If thou seek him, he will be found of thee*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. this does not argue, that the Heathen, before the gospel was preached to them, in seeking, might find the way of salvation: For,

1. Though he be speaking to the Heathen, yet they are considered, at this time, as having the gospel preached to them by him, and therefore not destitute of the external means of grace, which he advises them to attend to, in hope that their endeavours might be succeeded.

2. If, on the other hand, he speaks to them without regard to the privilege they then enjoyed, and so inform them what they might attain to, without divine revelation, which is the only sense that seems, in the least, to favour the objection; then, by *seeking the Lord*, we must understand their enquiring into the divine perfections, so far as the knowledge thereof is attainable by the light of nature; and the consequence of it would be their attaining such a degree thereof, as would discover the absurdity of that idolatry that they were guilty of, which the apostle is arguing against. And we may observe, that he makes use of such a mode of speaking, as is very agreeable to this sense of the text, when he says, *If haply ye might feel after him*; which is a metaphor, taken from those who are endeavouring to find their way in the dark, in which they feel after things which they cannot see, and sometimes they find them. And, when he concludes, that *haply*, or, peradventure, *you may find him*, this implies, that though the Heathen, by the light of nature, had some means of attaining such a measure of knowledge, as would have given them a full conviction that there was but one God, and that this God ought to be worshipped in a way agreeable to his divine perfections, and consequently that they ought not to think that the *God-head was like to gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device*, which would have effectually confuted that gross idola-



try, which they were charged with; yet some did not attend to the light of nature, so far as this amounts to, which was the case of those whom he was disputing with; and therefore his design is to reprove their idolatry, and persuade them to seek after that knowledge of God, which would have induced them to forsake it; so, that, in that part of his argument, he does not seem to proceed any farther than this; and therefore, when, in another part of it, he treats of that knowledge of God, which is more immediately connected with salvation, he speaks of *Jesus and the resurrection*, though they treated it with ridicule and contempt; therefore it does not follow, that the Heathen, by the light of nature, had a sufficient discovery of the way of salvation.

*Object. 5.* There is another objection against the doctrine we are maintaining, taken from some instances of those who are supposed to have been destitute of divine revelation, as living without the pale of the church, and yet recommended in scripture, as men excelling many others in grace, concerning whom there is no reason to doubt, but that they were in a state of salvation; such as Melchisedeck, Job, and his friends, with whom the dispute was held, mentioned in the book of Job; and, in the New Testament, the Centurion concerning whom our Saviour says, *Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel*, Matt. viii. 10. and Cornelius, whom we read of in the Acts of the Apostles; these were all supposed to be in a state of salvation, and yet reckoned among the Heathen.

*Answ. 1.* As to Melchisedeck, we have, under a foregoing answer \*, given our sentiments who he was, which, if what was there observed be true, will render this objection of no force: but, inasmuch as it is founded on the commonly-received opinion, namely: that he was a priest and a king in the land of Canaan, we may add, that this will make very little to their purpose; for, it is certain, he was not an idolater, or a stranger to revealed religion; and therefore it cannot be argued, from hence, that they, who are so, may be in a state of salvation.

2. As for Job, and his friends, mentioned in that book which goes under his name, it is certain, that they were well acquainted with the revealed will of God, as appears from the subject-matter of that book; and to say, that they were out of the pale of the church, as they did not descend from that branch of Abraham's family, from which the Israelites came, this will not do much service to their argument, unless it could be proved that they were strangers to the faith, and way of salvation, that was professed by the church. We have, under a foregoing answer †, considered them, as living before the scrip-

\* See page 266—268.

† See I. Vol. 458, 459.

tures were committed to writing, and also before the distinction between the Jew and Gentile was much known in the world, or, at least, before the true worshippers of God had universally apostatized to idolatry; and therefore, though many other nations were idolaters, and, probably, some were so in the country where they lived, yet it does not appear that they were so; therefore this cannot be brought, as an argument, to prove, that such who are destitute of the knowledge of the true God, as founded on divine revelation, may be in the way of salvation.

3. As for the centurion, though he was a Roman officer, it does not follow, from hence, that when he came to our Saviour, and expressed his great faith and humility, that he was an heathen; for he had seen or heard of Christ's miracles, and his doctrine, and probably, might be convinced thereby, and disposed to believe in him from that conviction; and, it is certain, his words do not argue him to be an heathen; therefore this part of the objection is foreign to the design for which it is brought.

4. As for Cornelius, it is true, there are many things extraordinary in his character, *viz.* that he was a devout man, and one that feared God; who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always, Acts x. 2. and it is farther said, concerning him, that his prayers and his alms came up for a memorial before God; all which expressions seem to favour the objection. Notwithstanding it may be replied to it,

(1.) If this account, concerning him, give ground to conclude that he was in a state of salvation before Peter was sent to preach the gospel to him, which the learned Beza\*, and others, suppose: nevertheless, it must be proved, that he was altogether a stranger to divine revelation, and the account we have of the way of salvation, therein, or else the argument, taken from thence, in opposition to what we are maintaining, is of no force. It is true, it is said, that *he fell down at Peter's feet, and worshipped him*, ver. 25. which seems to argue him to be no better than an heathen idolater at that time: but they who conclude him to have been, at the same time, in a state of salvation, reckon this nothing else, but an instance of extraordinary civil respect, which, because it had the appearance of religious worship, Peter, as it is intimated in the following words, refused to receive it, lest some present should conclude that he gave him that honour, which belongs to God alone.

All that I shall say, in answer to the objection, as supposing him to be in a state of salvation, is, that though he was a Roman, and bred up in their religion, yet it appears, from his general character that he was very much concerned about the

\* *Vid. Bez. in loc.*

salvation of his soul, and therefore, doubtless, he had not been wanting in his enquiries about the way to attain it. As for the gospel, that had not been publicly preached, at that time, to the Gentiles, and he had not had any opportunity to converse with the apostles, or to sit under their ministry, before this; but his conversation had been principally among the Jews, from whom he might be informed, that though they did not believe our Saviour, who was crucified, to be the Messiah: yet the Messiah was expected; and, when he came, he would do that for his people, which was foretold by the prophets. Here his faith rested, and he wanted only a convincing evidence that our Saviour was he; and this Peter was sent to communicate to him.

(2.) If we should suppose him not to have been converted before Peter was sent to him, which seems more probable, because, in Peter's relation of this matter to the apostles, he adds a particular circumstance that implies as much, in chap. xi. 14. namely, that he *should tell him words, whereby he and all his house, should be saved*; it plainly argues, that, before this, they were not in a state of salvation; and, if so, then the objection, which supposes that he was, is sufficiently answered: but, if we acquiesce in this answer to it, there is one difficulty that remains to be accounted for, viz. how this is consistent with his character, as a devout man, fearing God, and his prayers and his alms being accepted by him?

The only reply I shall give to this, is, that some duties may be performed that are materially good, by those who are not in a state of salvation; and that these works may, as far as they have any circumstance of goodness in them, come up for a memorial before God: thus God owned the humiliation, repentance, and reformation of the Ninevites; and it is said, that when one came to our Saviour, and told him how he had observed the commandments of God, and, at the same time, expressed an earnest desire to inherit eternal life; it is remarked on this occasion, that though he would not part with all for Christ, and therefore was not to be reckoned a believer; yet *Jesus, beholding him, loved him*, Mark x. 21. that is, he approved of what was good in him, though it wanted some circumstances that were necessary to denominate an action good in all respects. Therefore, why, may we not suppose that God approved of what was excellent in Cornelius's character, before he was converted by Peter's preaching?

*Object. 6.* It is farther objected, that the heathen had some means of salvation, which took their first rise from divine revelation, as appears from several rules and modes of worship, which they had, by tradition from the Jews. It was a generally received opinion among them, that the sins they commit-



ted, were, some way or other, to be expiated, or some atonement was to be made for them; upon which account they offered sacrifices, and, in order thereunto, had their temples, altars, and priests, consecrated for that purpose; which is something more than they had learnt from the law of nature.

*Ans.* This argument has very little weight in it; it is true, it seems to allow that there is a necessity of persons being, at least, in a small degree, apprised of some doctrines, which first took their rise from divine revelation: but that which was transmitted to the church, pure and uncorrupt, was handed down to several nations by uncertain tradition, with a great mixture of corruption; so that it is hard to find such a resemblance between them, as would denominate them of divine original. But suppose they had a conviction that sin was to be expiated by sacrifice; yet they had no manner of idea concerning the reference, of those sacrifices they offered, to Christ, which, as the apostle observes, was the only thing, in those sacrifices that were performed by a divine warrant, which had a tendency to *take away sin*, or *make them that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience*, Heb. ix. 9. and therefore, when the Jews offered sacrifices, and observed several other rites of worship, which were instituted by God, yet, inasmuch as they rested in the external performance thereof, and were destitute of faith in Christ, and other religious duties that were to attend them, they were reckoned no better than *vain oblations*, Isa. i. 13. or unprofitable services: how much more might all the rites of worship, observed by the heathen, be deemed so? Therefore this does not give us sufficient ground to conclude, that they had the means of salvation, who were destitute of divine revelation, and faith in Christ.

III. It is farther observed, in this answer, that Christ is the Saviour only of his body the church. This seems to obviate an objection that might be brought against the impossibility of attaining salvation, without faith in Christ; for some will be ready to conclude, that Christ may be a Saviour by his death, to those who are strangers to him, and not members of his body the church, and therefore it is added, that he is the Saviour only of such; which is what several understand, when they say, that there is no salvation out of the pale, or inclosure of the church. This is rather to be explained than denied; and it will appear, from what is said in the following answers, wherein the visible church is described, as including in it those who profess the true religion; and the invisible church is called the *body*, of which Christ is the *Saviour*, Eph. v. 23. and the members thereof are said to be made partakers of union and communion with him, and to be inseparably joined to him, as their head and Husband, when they are effectually

called; so that these have an interest in that salvation, which he has procured. From hence we have ground to conclude, that he will save none by his merits, but such who are made partakers of the internal graces of the Spirit, and are united to him by a lively faith, founded on divine revelation; which is agreeable to what has been before maintained in this answer, which establishes the necessity of divine revelation, or the impossibility of persons attaining salvation by framing their lives according to the light of nature, who never heard of the gospel, nor of Jesus Christ, the sun and substance thereof.

If this be reckoned an hard saying, tending to lessen the mercy of God, with respect to the objects thereof, it must be considered, that we have no other rule of judging concerning this matter, but what is contained in scripture. If God has therein made known to his people the only way of salvation, we have no warrant to extend it farther than he has done, or to say, that because he can apply his grace in such methods, as are altogether unknown to us, that therefore he will do it, is no just or conclusive argument. And the great design of all that has been said, in this answer, is to induce us to set the highest value on Christ, and his gospel; to adore and magnify him for the privileges which we enjoy, in being favoured with it, and to put us upon improving it to the best purposes; for, if they are excluded from the benefits thereof, who never heard of it, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Heb. ii. 3.

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QUEST. LXI. *Are all they saved who hear the gospel, and live in the church?*

ANSW. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible church, are not saved, but they only who are true members of the church invisible.

QUEST. LXII. *What is the visible church?*

ANSW. The visible church is a society made up of all such as, in all ages, and places of the world, do profess the true religion, and of their children.

QUEST. LXIII. *What are the special privileges of the visible church?*

ANSW. The visible church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government, of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies, and of enjoying the communion of saints, the or-

dinary means of salvation, offers of grace by Christ to all the members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come unto him.

QUEST. LXIV. *What is the invisible church?*

ANSW. The invisible church is the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head.

**T**HEY who are made partakers of Christ's redemption, and are brought into a state of salvation, have been before described, as members of Christ's body the church; and we are now led to consider them as brought into this relation to him, and accordingly are to enquire in what sense they are members of Christ's church, and so to speak of this church as to its nature, constitution, subjects, and privileges. And,

I. What we are to understand by the word *church*, as we find it applied in scripture.

1. It is sometimes used to signify any assembly that is met together, whatever be the design of their meeting. Though, indeed, it is very seldom taken in this sense in scripture; nevertheless, there are two or three places in which it is so understood: thus the multitude that met together at Ephesus, who made a riot, crying out, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*, are called *a church*; for the word is the same, which we generally so render, in Acts xix. 32. Our translators, indeed, render it, *The assembly was confused*, and, in ver. 39. it is said, *This matter ought to be determined in a lawful assembly*, that being an unlawful one; and, in ver. 41. *The town-clerk dismissed the assembly*; in all which places, the word, in the Greek \*, is the same which we, in other places, render *church*; and the reason why our translators have rendered it *assembly*, is, because the word *church* is used, in a very uncommon sense, in these places: and we do not find it taken in that sense in any other part of scripture.

2. It is frequently used, by the Fathers, metonymically, for the place in which the church met together for religious worship, and so it is often taken among us, and some other reformed churches, as well as the Papists; but it does not sufficiently appear that it is ever so understood in scripture. It is true, some suppose, that it is taken in this sense in 1 Cor. xi. 28. where it is said, *When ye come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you*; and, they think, it is farther explained, and proved to be taken in this sense, from what the apostle adds, in ver. 20. *When ye come together in*



one place; and also from what is said in ver. 22. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* From whence they conclude that the apostle means nothing else but the place where they were convened together, and, more especially, because it is here opposed to their own houses.

But to this it may be replied, that, in the first of these verses but now mentioned, viz. *when ye come together in the church*, it may be very easily understood of particular persons met together with the rest of the church; and when it is said, in ver. 20. that *when ye come together into one place*, this does not refer to the place in which they were assembled\*; but to their meeting together with one design, or accord. And when it is said, in ver. 32. *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* the opposition is not between their own houses and the place where they were together; but the meaning is, that by your not eating and drinking in your own houses, but doing it in the presence of the church, or the assembly of God's people that are met together, you are not only chargeable with indecency and interrupting them in the work which they are come about, but you make a kind of schism among them, as doing that which they cannot, in conscience, approve of, or join with you in; and this you are ready to call caprice, or humour, in them, and hereby you despise them. And, indeed, the place of worship cannot properly speaking, be said to be the object of contempt; therefore the apostle does not use the word, in this metonymical sense, for the place of worship, but for the worshipping assembly.

*Object.* The word *synagogue* is often taken metonymically, in scripture, for the place where persons were assembled to worship: thus our Saviour is said sometimes to *teach in the synagogue of the Jews*, Matt. iv. 23. and elsewhere we read of one, concerning whom the Jews say, *He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue*, Luke xii. v. and elsewhere the Psalmist speaking of the church's enemies, says, *they have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land*, Psal. lxxiv. 8. and the apostle James, adapting his mode of speaking to that which was used among the Jews, calls the church of God a *synagogue*, *If there come unto your assembly*, or synagogue, as it is in the margin, *a man with a gold ring*, &c. James ii. 2. where the word is taken for the place where they were assembled; therefore we have as much reason to understand the word *church* for the place where the church meets together.

*Answer.* It is true, the word *synagogue*, in most of these

\* The words *ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*, when used elsewhere, cannot be understood of the place where persons were met, but of the unanimity of those who were engaged in the same action; and therefore it is rendered *unitedly*, in Acts ix. 1 and chap. ix. 26.

scriptures, is taken for the place where persons meet together on a religious account, though it is very much to be doubted whether it be to be understood so in the last of the scriptures referred to, and therefore our translators render it *assembly*; and so the meaning is, when you are met together, if a poor man come into your assembly, you despise him: but suppose the word *synagogue* were to be taken in this, as it is in the other scriptures, for the place of worship, and that, by a parity of reason, the word *church* may be taken in the same sense; all that can be inferred from hence is, that they, who call the places of worship *churches*, speak agreeable to the sense, though it may be not the express words of scripture: but this is so trifling a controversy, that it is not worth our while to say any thing more to it.

The learned Mede \* insists largely on it, in a discourse, founded on those words of the apostle before-mentioned, *Have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the church of God?* in which he attempts to prove, that the apostle, by *the church*, means the place of worship, from the opposition that there is between their *own houses* and *the church of God*, the inconclusiveness of which argument has been before considered. What he farther says, to prove that there were places in the apostle's days, appropriated, or set apart, for divine worship; and, in particular, that the room in which they met together, on the days of our Saviour's resurrection, and eight days after, in which they were honoured with his presence, was the same in which he eat his last Passover with them, and instituted the Lord's Supper, and that it was in that place that they constantly met together for worship, and that therein the seven deacons were afterwards chosen, mentioned in Acts vi. and that after this a goodly church was erected on the same spot of ground; these are no other than uncertain conjectures. That they met together in an apartment, or convenient room, in the dwelling-house of some pious disciple, is very probable; but his observations from its being an upper room, as freest from disturbance, and nearest to heaven, seems to be too trifling for so great a man. And what he says farther, in defence of it, as supposing that this is what is intended by their *breaking bread from house to house*, in Acts ii. 4, 6. is not so agreeable to the sense of the Greek words †, as our translation, which he militates against, and supposes, that it ought to be rendered *in the house*, that is, in this house appointed for the same purpose.

What he farther adds, to prove that there were particular places appropriate for worship, in the three first Centuries, by referring to several quotations out of the Fathers, who lived

\* See his works, Vol. I. Book II. Page 405, & seq.

† *KAT' EKKECH.*

in these ages, is not to be contested; though the objection he brings against this being universally true, taken from what Origen, Minutius, Felix, Arnobius, and Lactantius say, concerning the Christians, in their time, declining to build them, after they had been disturbed and harrassed, by various persecutions, seems to have some weight in it, and is not sufficiently answered by him. What he says on this subject, may be consulted in the place before-mentioned.

All that we shall say, as to this matter, is, that it is beyond dispute, that, since the church was obliged to convene together for religious worship, it was necessary that the usual place, in which this was performed, should be known by them. But it still remains uncertain, whether, (though, at some times, in the more peaceable state of the church, they met constantly in one place) they did not, at other times, adjourn from place to place, or sometimes convene in the open air, in places where they might meet with less disturbance from their enemies. All, who are conversant in the history of the church in those ages, know, that they often met, especially in times of persecution, in caves, and other subterraneous places, near the graves of those who had suffered martyrdom, in which their end was not only to encourage them to bear the like testimony to Christianity, that they had done, but that they might be more retired and undisturbed in their worship.

But, to add nothing more on this subject, as being of less moment, that which I would principally militate against is, what that excellent writer, but now mentioned, attempts to prove, in his following *Dissertation\**, concerning the reverence that is due to these churches; not only whilst divine duties are performed therein, but at other times, as supposing that they retain a relative sanctity, which calls for veneration at all times. The main stress of his argument is taken from the sanctity of those places, which, by divine appointment, were consecrated for worship, under the ceremonial law; and the reverence that was expressed by persons when they entered into them, which, by a supposed parity of reason, he applies to those places which are erected for worship under the gospel-dispensation.

To which it may be replied, that it does not follow, that because the tabernacle and temple had a relative holiness in them, and therefore the same thing is applicable to the places of worship under the gospel-dispensation. For the temple was a type of God's presence among men, and in particular of the incarnation of Christ, which was a glorious instance thereof; and it was an ordinance for their faith in this matter, and therefore holy. And besides, there was a visible external symbol

\* See page 452, & seq.



of God's presence in these places, whose throne was upon the *mercy seat*, between the cherubims, in the holy of holies; and therefore this might well be called a *holy place*, even, when worship was not performed in it: but it is certain, that other places of worship, and, in particular, the synagogues were not then reckoned so, when no worship was performed in them, though they were erected for that purpose; and our Saviour seems to insinuate, that the holiness of places is taken away under the gospel-dispensation, as appears by his reply to the woman of Samaria, when speaking concerning their *fathers worshipping in that mountain*, viz. in the temple that was erected on mount Gerizzim, he says, that *the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*, John iv. 20, 21. that is, no place shall be so consecrated for religious worship, as that it shall be more acceptable there than elsewhere, and consequently no veneration is to be paid to any such place more than another, where the same worship may be performed \*. But this is little other than a digression from our present design, which is to shew, that the word *church*, in scripture, is, for the most part, if not always, taken for an assembly of Christians met together for religious worship, according to the rules which Christ has given for their direction herein.

The Hebrew word, in the Old Testament, by which the church of the Jews is signified, is generally rendered the *congregation* †, or assembly; so that in our translation, we never meet with the word *church* in the Old Testament; yet what is there called the *congregation*, or assembly of the Israelites, might, very properly, be called a *church*, inasmuch as it is so

\* It may be observed, that though the learned author before-mentioned gives sufficient evidence, from the Fathers, that there were several places appropriated, and some erected, for divine worship, during the three first Centuries; and he thinks, that whether they were consecrated or no, there was a great degree of reverence paid to them, even at such times, when divine service was not performed in them: Yet he does not produce any proof for this out of the writings of the Fathers, in those Centuries; and it is impossible that he should, for from Eusebius's account of this matter, it appears that the consecration of churches was first practised in the Fourth Century, [Vid. ejusd. Hist. Eccl. Lib. X. cap. 3.] As for the quotations that Mr. Mede brings from Chrysostom and Ambrose, to prove that reverence was paid to the churches in their times it must be observed, that they lived in the Fourth Century, in which churches being not only appropriated, but consecrated for public worship, it is no wonder to find the Fathers of that age expressing a reverence for them. Nevertheless, it is very evident, from the words of those Fathers here cited, that they intend thereby nothing else but a reverent behaviour, which ought to be expressed by those who come into the church to perform any act of divine worship; and this we are far from denying, whether the external rites of consecration be used or no. As for his quotation taken from Tertulian, who lived in the end of the Second Century it don't prove that he thought that reverence ought to be expressed to the places of worship, but that the highest reverence ought to be used in the acts of worship, and particularly in prayer, which is an undoubted truth, whether we worship God in the church, or any where else.

styled in the New Testament: thus it is said, concerning Moses, that *he was in the church in the wilderness*, Acts vii. 38. But it is certain the word *church* is peculiarly adapted, in the New Testament, to signify the Christian church worshipping God, according to the rules prescribed by our Saviour, and others, delivered by his apostles, under the Spirit's direction; which is the sense in which we are to understand it, in speaking to these answers. (a) And this leads us to consider,

(a) The word Church is of Greek derivation. *Κυριακον* is used by ancient authors for the place of public worship. The old word *Kyroke*, contracted into *Kirk*, and softened into *church*, is a compound of *Κυριε ομις*. It is of very extensive signification. Church is used generally in our version of the New Testament, for the Greek *Εκκλησια*.—

The words *Εκκλησια* in the New, and *קהל* in the Old Testament, are synonymous. They both proceed from the same root *קל*, the voice. The meaning of each is assembly—any number of persons met, by previous appointment. The verb, in each language, from which the noun immediately proceeds, is, to call out, to call together, and the noun is that which is so called.

It is, of course, no abuse of language to apply the word to any assembly, great or small, which meets for social or judiciary purposes. The character of the assembly is known from the connexion in which the word is used, and not from the word itself. In this latitude of application, the inspired writers of both Testaments made use of the words *קהל* and *Εκκλησια*.

In the Old Testament, the former of these words is applied to a number of idolatrous women—bands of soldiers—the commonwealth of Israel—distinct worshipping congregations—a representative assembly—a council, and, I may add, to other assemblies of every description.

1. The word *קהל* is used in Jer. xlv. 15. It is applied to a great number of idolatrous women, who, together with their husbands, persisted in their opposition to the command of God by the prophet Jeremiah. It is worthy of being remarked, that the Septuagint, in this instance, renders the word by *Συναγωγη*. Our translation renders it *multitude*.

2. It signifies bands of soldiers. Ezek. xxvi. 7. These marched against Tyrus, under the direction of the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. The Septuagint renders it, as above, *synagogues*, and the English translators, *companies*.

3. The word (which, for the sake of the English reader, I shall write *KEL*.) is used for the whole commonwealth of Israel. That people, called by God, were bound together by a sacred ritual, and all were commanded to keep the passover Exod. xii. 6. Our translation renders it the whole assembly, and in the Septuagint it is *Παν το πλθος*.

4. It signifies distinct worshipping societies. Ps. xxvi. 12. In this verse, the Psalmist professes his resolution to honour the institutions of social worship. He had rather accompany the saints to the congregation, than sit in the society of the wicked, ver. 5. In both cases the same Hebrew word is used; the Septuagint use *Εκκλησια*, and the English translators, *congregation*. *KEL*, and *Εκκλησια*, are, with equal propriety, applied to the hateful clubs of the wicked, and to the worshipping assemblies of the saints.

5. The word is also applied to a representative assembly.—

—After the regular organization of the Israelitish commonwealth, although Moses transacted all public business with the chiefs, he is uniformly represented as speaking unto all Israel. This form of speech was not to be misunderstood by the Jews. They had not learned to deny that principle upon which the represented identify with the representative. Dent. xix. 14, 15, 25. When Moses was about to give his last advice to the Hebrews, he summoned the *KEL* before

II. That the church is distinguished into *visible* and *invisible*, each of which are particularly defined, and will be farther insisted on, under some following heads; but before this, we

him. Deut. xxxi. 30. In this instance, the word unquestionably signifies a representative body. My reasons for considering it so, are,

1. The obvious meaning of the passage. Ver. 29. "Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes—that I may speak these words in *their ears*."—ver. 30. "And Moses spake in the ears of all the *קִהָּל*—the words of this song." The KEL of Israel are the elders and officers met together.

2. It is impossible it can be otherwise. Moses could not speak in the ears of all Israel, except by representation. No human voice can extend over two millions of men.

3. Upon the principle of representation Moses uniformly acted. He instructed the elders, and the elders commanded the people. Deut. xxvii. 1. "And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people." Without multiplying texts, I refer the reader to Exod. xii. 3. "Speak unto all the congregation of Israel"—verse 21. "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel." Even in the most solemn acts of religion, the elders represented the whole congregation. Their hands were placed upon the head of the bullock which was offered to make atonement for the whole congregation. Lev. iv. 15. And that the reader may not be without an instance of the use of the word KEL, in the most abstract form which can exist upon the representative principle itself, I refer him to Gen. xxviii. 3. Here it is applied to a single individual. Higher than this, representation cannot be carried. Ver. 1. "Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him"—ver. 3. "That thou mayest be a KEL." Jacob was a KEL, as the representative of a very numerous posterity.

6. The word is used to signify a council—an assembly for deliberation and judgment. Gen. xlix. 6. The patriarch speaks of Simeon and Levi, these two are a KEL. It is, indeed, a representative one. Verse 7. "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." This could have been said of the two sons of Jacob, only as including their posterity.

This KEL was however a council. They consulted and determined to destroy the Schechemites. The assembly was a conspiracy. The Septuagint renders the word by Συχασις.

The KEL in which Job cried for redress, could not have been the church of Israel, but a court of Judicature. Job xxx. 28.

Solomon, acquainted with the laws of Israel, must have referred to the power of Judicatures, in detecting crimes, when he spoke of the KEL, in Prov. xxvi. 26. and v. 14.

The KEL, to which Ezekiel refers, xvi. 40. and xxiii. 45—47. cannot be mistaken. The prophet himself expressly says this KEL would sit in judgment try, and decide, and execute the sentence, upon those who came before them, In these verses, the Septuagint renders the word by Οχλος, and our translation. of it is company.

By the law of God, regular courts of jurisprudence were established among the Israelites. In no instance was the whole body of the people to be judges. Deut. xvi. 18. The rulers in each city, the officers of justice, are uniformly called elders, and unto these elders met in council, is every case referred. He must be, indeed, little acquainted with the law given by Moses, who is ignorant of this fact. See Deut. xxi. xxii. and xxv. chapters.

These elders met in council. To them the name *Presbytery* was applied in latter times. Moses and the prophets use the names KEL and OD-EH. These words are used indiscriminately in the Old Testament. It is to be observed, that they are translated in the Septuagint, generally by ecclesia and synagoga. This phraseology is adopted in the New Testament. The New Testament writers use the Septuagint translation of the scriptures in their quotations from the Old Testament.



may offer something by way of premisal, concerning the reason of this distinction. The word *church*, according to the grammatical construction thereof, signifies a number of persons

Nehemiah summoned before the council the nobles and rulers who transgressed the law. Neh. v. 7. They exacted usury for their money, and are to be tried by the competent authorities. The word *ἐκκλησία*, in this verse, we translate assembly, and the Septuagint reads *ἐκκλησία*. Compare Numb. xxxv. 24, with Deut. xix. 12, and it will appear, that the congregation which judicially tried the man-slayer, is the *Ecclesia* of elders. See also Josh. xx. 4. "He shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders"—ver. 6. "And stand before the congregation for judgment."

The word *ἐκκλησία*, in the New Testament, is not, any more than its correspondents in the Old, confined in its application to a popular assembly. It signifies a tumultuous mob, Acts xix. 32, and the city council, Acts xix. 39. This sense of the word is justified by the best Greek authors. Consult Passor, who quotes Demosthenes and Suidas, in defence of this application. Hence, the verb *ἐπικαλέομαι* is, in the middle and passive voices, to appeal from an inferior to a superior Judicatory. "Plutarch," says Parkhurst, "several times applies the verb in the same view." Acts xxv. 11, 12, 21, 25. See also Chap. xxvi. 32. and xxviii. 19.

In the application of *Ecclesia* to the christian church, which is the most common use of it in the New Testament, it signifies the whole church militant—all the elect of God—private societies of believers—single organized congregations—several congregations united under a Presbytery—and church rulers met in Judicatory.

1. The church militant is an *Ecclesia*. Matt. xvi. 18. and Acts ii. 47. "The Lord added to the church daily."

2. The whole body of elect and redeemed sinners. Eph. v. 25. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it"—ver. 27. "That he might present it to himself a glorious church."

3. Two or three private Christians, met for prayer and conference, or living together in a family, are an *ἐκκλησία*. Acts xiv. 23. "They had ordained them elders in every church." The *Ecclesia*, or Church, existed prior to its organization, by the election and ordination of rulers. It existed, in this sense, even in private houses. Rom. xvi. 5. and Col. iv. 15.

4. The word signifies an organized congregation. Acts xiv. 23. The *Ecclesia* did not cease to be one, when presbyters were ordained to teach and to rule in the congregation.

5. The word is applied to several congregations regularly presbyterated. There is nothing to render this application improper. It is no abuse, in any language, of a generic term, to apply it to any collection of the individuals belonging to that genus, in a connexion which manifests the restriction. The church of Christ in Philadelphia, is all Christians in that city, although there should be one hundred congregations in it. The church in Corinth, is as intelligible a phrase as the church in the house of Nymphas—The church on earth, or, the church in glory. This application is not only just, but scriptural. The saints in Corinth were one *Ecclesia*. 1 Cor. i. 2. But in Corinth were several congregations. There were more *Ecclesias* than one, xiv. 34. Corinth was a city of great extent, wealth, and population. In it were several heathen temples, dedicated to different pagan divinities. There were upwards of a thousand prostitutes attending at the temple of Venus. In this city, Paul met with uncommon success in preaching the gospel. Here he abode nearly two years. Considering the rapidity with which the gospel was then spreading, attended with miraculous power, is it reasonable, that in Corinth there was yet but one congregation of professed Christians? In the present day, without any supernatural, or even uncommon success, it is not singular for a preacher, in a large city, to collect in a few years a congregation of religious professors. At the first sermon of Paul, numbers were converted. After this, the Lord informs him, he has "much

that are called; and, in its application to this present subject, every one, who is a member thereof, may be said to be called to be made partaker of that salvation which is in Christ. Now, as there is a twofold calling spoken of in scripture, to wit, one visible and external, whereby some are made partakers of the external privileges of the gospel, and all the ordinances thereof; the other internal, and saving, whereby others are made partakers of those special and distinguishing blessings, which God bestows on the heirs of salvation: the former of these our Saviour intends, when he says, *Many are called, but few are chosen*, Matt. xx. 16. the latter is what the apostle speaks of, when he connects it with *justification* and *glorification*, Rom. viii. 30. Now they who are called in the former of these senses, are included in that branch of the distinction which respects the *visible* church; the latter are members of that church which is styled *invisible*; the former are members of Christ by profession; the latter are united to him, as their Head and Husband, who are made partakers of spiritual life from him, and shall live for ever with him. The members of the visible church are the children of God, as made partakers of the external dispensation of the covenant of grace; such God speaks of, when he says, *I have nourished and brought up children*,

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“people in this city.” Here were several pastors—public officers with a diversity of tongues, suited to the wants of the church; yet, when Paul wrote his epistle, all the congregations, although differing about the merits of their respective founders, are called one *Ecclesia*. In a similar sense is the word applied to the church at Ephesus, at Antioch, and Jerusalem.

6. *Εκκλησία* is applied to an *assembly* of elders. Matt. xviii. 17. The constitution of the Jewish courts is known. Each synagogue had its elders and officers. The inferior courts were subordinate to the Sanhedrim. Never were cases decided by the populace. Our Redeemer spoke in the common language of Judea. He referred to the synagogue court. When translated into Greek, what other name should be given to this Judicatory, than the one given, *Ecclesia*? There is no misunderstanding of this text, by one who impartially considers the connexion. There are in the church authorized *rulers*, distinct from the *ruled*. The rulers, and not the ruled, must ultimately determine controversies. To officers, was committed the power of the keys—the power of binding and loosing; and this *Ecclesia*, ver. 17, has the power of *binding and loosing*, ver. 18.—and it may consist even of two or three persons, ver. 20. The whole passage is a directory for the application of ecclesiastic power conferred upon church officers. Ch. xvi. 19. I shall close this note, by a quotation from the lectures of Dr. Campbell, of Aberdeen. It must appear extraordinary from the pen of such a scholar. “But in any intermediate sense between a single congregation and “the whole community of Christians, not one instance can be brought of the application of the word *Εκκλησία*, in sacred writ. If any impartial hearer is not satisfied on this point, let him examine every passage in the New Testament, wherein the word we render church is to be found; let him canvas in the writings of the Old Testament every sentence wherein the correspondent word occurs, and if he find a *single passage*, wherein it clearly means either the priesthood, or the rulers of the nation, or any thing that can be called a church representative, let him fairly admit the distinction as scriptural and proper.”

Isa: i. 2. and elsewhere he says, concerning the church of the Jews, who were externally in covenant with him, *Israel is my son, even my first-born*, Exod. iv. 22. But the members of the invisible church, are the children of God by faith, Gal. iii. 16. and because children, in this sense, therefore *heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*, Rom. viii. 17. These things must particularly be insisted on; and accordingly,

I. We shall speak something concerning the invisible church, which is described, in one of the answers we are explaining, as containing the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ their Head.

1. They are said to be elect, and subject to Christ their Head; upon which account, some have included, in this number, the holy angels, inasmuch as they are styled, by the apostle, *elect angels*, 1 Tim. v. 21. and Christ is, in some respects, their Head, as the apostle calls him, *The Head of all principality and power*, Coloss. ii. 10. and elsewhere the church is said to come to an *innumerable company of angels*, Heb. xii. 22. But though they are, indeed, elected, it may be questioned, whether they were chosen in Christ, as the elect among the children of men are said to be; and, though Christ be styled their Head: yet his Headship over them doth not include in it those things that are implied in his being the Head of his chosen people, as he is the Head of the covenant of grace, on which their salvation is founded; or *the Captain of their salvation*, as he is styled, chap. ii. 10. who, having purchased them by his blood, brings them into a state of grace, and then to glory. For these and such-like reasons, I would not assert that angels are properly a part of Christ's invisible church, and therefore it only includes those that are elected to salvation among the children of men.

2. They are farther described as such, who have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head; therefore there is a part of them that are not actually brought into him. These our Saviour speaks of under the metaphor of sheep, who were *not of this fold*, concerning whom he says, *Them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice*, John x. 16. And there is another part of them, who are triumphant in heaven, as well as those that are actually called by the grace of God, who are in their way to heaven, struggling, at present, with many difficulties, through the prevalency of corruption, and conflicting with many temptations, and exposed to many evils that attend this present state. These different circumstances of those who are brought in to Christ, give occasion to that known distinction between the church triumphant and militant.



*Object.* To that part of this description of the invisible church, which includes in it those that shall be gathered unto Christ, it is objected, that no one can be said to be a member of this church, who is not actually brought in unto him; for that would be to suppose, that unconverted persons might be members thereof, and consequently that Christ is their Head, Shepherd and Saviour; though they be characterized, in scripture, as children of wrath, running in all excess of riot, refusing to submit to him, and neglecting that great salvation which is offered in the gospel: How can such be members of Christ's church, and that in the highest sense thereof?

And it is farther objected, against the account given of the invisible church in this answer, that a part of those who are said to be the members thereof, are considered at present as not existing; and therefore it must be a very improper, if not absurd, way of speaking, to say, that such are members of Christ's church.

*Ans.* I am not inclined to extenuate those expressions of scripture, which represent unconverted persons as children of wrath, in open rebellion against God, and refusing to submit to him; nor would I say any thing from whence such might have the least ground to conclude that they have a right to any of the privileges of God's elect, or Christ's invisible church, or that they are included in that number; for that would be to expose the doctrine of election to one of the main objections that is brought against it, as though it led to licentiousness: nevertheless, let it be considered, that this answer treats of the invisible church; therefore whatever privileges are reserved for them, who, though elected, are in an unconverted state, these are altogether unknown to them; and it would be an unwarrantable presumption for them to lay claim to them. However, we must not deny that God knows who are his, who are redeemed by Christ, and what blessings, pursuant thereunto, shall be applied to them: he knows the time when they shall be made a willing people, in the day of his power, and what grace he designs to work in them: he considers the elect in general, as given to Christ, and Christ as having undertaken to do all that is necessary to fit them for the heavenly blessedness.

Moreover, we must not suppose but that God knows, without the least doubt and uncertainty, the whole number of those who shall appear with Christ, in glory, at his second coming; for things that are future to us, are present, with respect to him, as with one single view, he knows all things, past and to come, as well as present; and therefore, if the expression made use of be thus qualified, which is agreeable to the design of this answer, I cannot see that the objection has sufficient force

to overthrow it, any more than those arguments that are usually brought against the doctrine of election, can render it less worthy to be received by us.

As for the other branch of the objection, that they, who are not *in being*, cannot be denominated members of Christ's church in any sense: though it be allowed, that such cannot be, at present, the subjects of any privileges; yet we must consider, that, since God seeth not as man seeth, they may, in his eternal purpose to save them, be considered as the objects thereof, and therefore in his account, be reckoned members of Christ's invisible church, that is, such as he designs to bring into being, and afterwards to make them meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. Therefore I see no reason to except against this mode of speaking, in which they are described as such, who shall be gathered under Christ, their Head: however, if the objection only respected the propriety, or impropriety, of a word, provided it had not a tendency to overthrow the doctrine of God's certain and peremptory election, I would not militate against it.

3. This church, which is said to consist of the whole number of the elect, is styled invisible; by which we are not to understand, that their election of God cannot be known by themselves, since we have sufficient ground, from scripture, to conclude, that believers may attain the assurance thereof in this life: but it is so called, because many of them have finished their course in this world, and are entered into that state, in which they are, with respect to those that live here, no more seen.

Moreover, the number of those who are styled the members of this church, cannot be determined by any creature. It is only known to God; and that grace, which any of them experience, how far soever they may arrive to the knowledge of it themselves, cannot be said to be certainly and infallibly known by others; and therefore the apostle says, concerning them, that *their life is hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3.

However, though this church be, at present, invisible, yet when the whole number of the elect shall be brought in to Christ, and, as the apostle speaks, *Gathered together unto him*, 2 Thess. ii. 1. then it shall no longer remain invisible; for *when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, they also shall appear with him in glory*, Col. iii. 4. We may farther observe concerning the church, as thus described,

(1.) That it has many glorious characters given of it: thus it is frequently called Christ's spouse, in the Song of Solomon, by which he seems to intend more than what could well be said concerning the Jewish church; for the description there given of it, as *being all fair, and without spot*, Cant. iv. 7.

and is rather applicable to the state in which the saints shall be hereafter, than that in which they are at present; and therefore I am inclined to think, that he speaks of the invisible church, or the election of grace. And this character, given of them, is taken from that conjugal union which there is between Christ and believers; on which account it is said elsewhere, *Thy Maker is thine Husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel*, Isa. liv. 5. and the Psalmist describes it, in a very elegant manner, as thus related to Christ, when he says, *upon thy right-hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir*, Psal. xlv. 9. and then speaks of it, as arrived to the highest pitch of honour and happiness, when introduced into the king's presence *in raiment of needle-work, with gladness and rejoicing, being brought into his palace*, ver. 14, 15. and the apostle calls it, *The General Assembly and church of the first-born, which are written*, Heb. xii. 23. or, as it is in the margin, *enrolled in heaven*; and it is also considered, when presented by Christ to himself, or to his own view at last, being brought to perfection, as a *glorious church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy, and without blemish*, Eph. v. 27. In this respect it may be called, *The holy catholic church*, though many, without sufficient ground, understand those words of the creed, in which it is so called, in a sense very different from, and inferior to it.

(2.) This invisible church is but one body, and therefore not divided, like the visible church, into many particular bodies, as will be observed under a following head. This seems to be the meaning of that expression, in which it is said, *My dove, my undefiled is but one*, Cant. vi. 9.

(3.) It is not the seat of human government, as the visible church is; nor are persons said to be received into its communion. And whatever officers Christ has appointed, to secure the order, and to promote the edification of his churches, these have nothing to do in the church, considered as invisible; however, it is eminently under Christ's special government, who is the Head, as well as the Saviour thereof.

(4.) There are many special privileges, which belong to it, that include in them all the graces and comforts, which are applied to them by the Holy Spirit: and so they are considered, as enjoying union and communion with Christ, in grace and glory, as being called, justified, sanctified, and many of them assured of their interest in Christ here and all of them shall be glorified with him hereafter. These privileges are insisted on, in several following answers; for which reason we pass them over at present, and proceed to consider another of the answers, which we are to explain: And accordingly,



II. We have an account of the visible church, which is described as a society, made up of all such, who, in all ages, and places of the world, profess the true religion, and of their children. In this description of the church, we may observe,

1. That it is called visible, not only because the worship performed therein, and the laws given to those particular churches, of which it consists, are visible; but its members are so, or known to the world: and the profession they make of the true religion, or subjection to Christ, as their Head and Sovereign, is open, free, and undisguised, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of the world.

2. It is called a society, which denomination it takes from the communion which its members have with one another: but, inasmuch as the word is in the singular number, denoting but one body of men, it is to be enquired whether this be a proper mode of speaking, though frequently used.

(1.) It is allowed, by all Protestants, that there are, and have been, ever since the preaching of the gospel by the apostles, many particular churches in the world\*; and this is agreeable to what we often read of in the New Testament, as the apostle Paul directs his epistles to particular churches; such as that at Ephesus, Corinth, Philippi, &c. Some of these were larger, others smaller, as denoting, that no regard is to be had to the number of persons of which each of them consists: thus we read of churches in particular houses, 1 Cor. xvi. 19. and these may each of them, without the least impropriety of expression, be styled a visible church, for the reasons above mentioned.

(2.) It must also be allowed, on the other hand, that the church is spoken of in the singular number, in scripture, as though it were but one: thus it is said that Saul *made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison*, Acts viii. 3. and, speaking of himself, he says, *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church*, Phil. iii. 6. and elsewhere, that, *beyond measure, he persecuted the church of God, and wasted it*, Gal. i. 13. Now it is certain, that it was not one particular church that he directed his persecuting rage against, but all the churches of Christ, wherever he came, especially those in Judea, which he speaks of in the plural number, ver. 22. by which he explains what he means, by his *persecuting the church of God*; for it is said, *He which*

\* The Papists, indeed, pretend that there is no other church in the world, but that which they style catholic and visible, of which the bishop of Rome is the head; but we may see, in answer to this vain boast, as it is said concerning the church in Sardis, in Rev. iii. 1. *Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.* Protestants, though they speak oftentimes of the visible church as one, yet they don't deny but that there are many particular churches contained in it. See the assembly's Confession of faith, chap. 25. § 4.

*persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed*, ver. 23. and elsewhere it is said, *God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. by which we are to understand all the churches; for the apostles were not pastors of any particular church, but acted as pastors in all the churches wherever they came, though every church had its own respective pastor set over it, who was, in a peculiar manner, related to it; yet all these churches are called, in this place, *the church*. Therefore we are not to contend about the use of a word, provided it be rightly explained, whether persons speak of the church in the singular, or churches in the plural number. If we speak of the church, as though it were but one, the word is to be taken collectively for all the churches of Christ in the world: this the apostle explains, when he speaks of them all, as though they were *one body*, under the influence of the same *Spirit*, called in *one hope of their calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all*, Eph. iv. 4—6. this is that *unity of the Spirit* which they were to *endeavour to keep*, and so to act agreeably to their faith herein; and, in this respect, we freely allow that all the churches of Christ are one; there is but one foundation on which they are built, one rule of faith, one way to heaven, in which they all professedly walk. Moreover, the churches of Christ have not only communion with one another, in their particular societies, but there is a communion of churches, whereby they own one another, as walking in the same fellowship with themselves, express a sympathy with each other in afflictive circumstances, and rejoice in the edification and flourishing state of each other. In these respects we consider the churches as one, and so call them all the church of Christ.

Nevertheless, this is to be understood with certain limitations; and therefore we are not to suppose that the church, as the seat of government, is one; or that there is one set of men, who have a warrant to bear rule over the whole, that is, over all the churches of Christ; for none suppose that there is one universal pastor of the church, except the Papists. All Protestants, however they explain their sentiments about the catholic visible church, allow, that the seat of government is in each particular church, of which no one has any right to give pastors to other churches, or to appoint who shall be admitted into their respective communion.

(3.) There is another thing in this description of the visible church, which stands in need of being explained and defended, when it is said, that it consists of *all* such as, in all ages, and places, of the world, do profess the true religion: if nothing be intended hereby, but that no one has a right to the privilege of

communion of saints, or fit to be received into any church of Christ, but those who profess the true religion, namely, the faith on which it is built; this I am far from denying; for that would be to suppose that the church professes one faith, and some of its members another; or that it builds up what it allows others to throw down.

But I am a little at a loss to account for the propriety of the expression, when the church is said to be a society, professing the true religion, *in all ages*. It cannot be supposed that the church, or churches, that are now in being, are any part of that society which professed the true religion in Moses's time, or in the apostolic age; but it is principally the propriety of expression that is to be excepted against; for I suppose, nothing is intended hereby, but that as the church, in every respective foregoing age, consisted of those who embraced the true religion, it consists of no other in our age.

There is one thing more which I would take leave to observe in this description of the church, which renders it incomplete, inasmuch as it speaks of it as consisting of those who profess the true religion; but makes no mention of that bond of union which constitutes every particular branch of this universal church of Christ. It speaks, indeed of those qualifications which belong to every one as a Christian, which is a remote, though necessary condition of being received into church communion; but takes no notice of that mutual consent, which is the more immediate bond by which the members of every church coalesce together: but this we may have occasion to speak of under a following head.

The last thing I observe, in this description of the visible church, is, that it consists not only of the professors of the true religion, but of their children; this is rather to be explained, than denied: however, I cannot but observe, that many have run too great lengths in what they have asserted concerning the right of children to this privilege. Some of the Fathers have not only considered them as members of the church, but brought them to the Lord's table, and given them the bread dipped in the wine, the same way as food is applied to infants, when they were too young to discover any thing of the design thereof: that which led them into this mistake, was their misunderstanding the sense of our Saviour's words, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*, John vi. 53. supposing that this was meant of their eating bread, and drinking wine in the Lord's supper, though they might easily have known that this was not our Saviour's meaning; inasmuch as the Lord's supper was not instituted, till some time after, and, when instituted, it was not designed to be reckoned so necessary to salvation, as that the bare not par-



taking thereof should exclude from it. Cyprian gives an account of his administering it to an infant brought by her mother; and relates a circumstance attending it, that savours so much of superstition, in that grave and pious Father, that I forbear to mention it.\* And this was not only practised by him, but by several others in some following ages. And many in later ages speak of children as incomplete members of the church; and some suppose that this is the result of their baptismal dedication; others that it is their birth-right, and as the consequence hereof they have maintained, that when they come to be adult, they rather claim their right to church-communion than are admitted to it, as those are, who are not the children of church-members, and as a farther consequence deduced from this supposition, they assert, that if they are guilty of vile enormities, and thereby forfeit this privilege, they are in a formal way to be excommunicated, and that it is a defect in the government of the churches in our day, that this is not practised by them.

This is not what is intended by children's being members of churches, together with their parents, in this answer; but that which I think all will allow of, *viz.* that children being the property of parents, they are obliged to dedicate them, together with themselves, to God, and pursuant thereunto to endeavour to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, hoping that through his blessing on education, they may, in his own time and way, be qualified for church communion, and then admitted to it, that hereby the churches of Christ may have an addition of members to fill up the places of those who are called off the stage.

As to the concern of the church in this matter, which in some respects redounds to the advantage of the children of those who are members of it, they are obliged to shew their regard to them, so far as to exhort their parents, if there be occasion, to express a due concern for their spiritual welfare; or, if they are defective herein, to extend their censure rather to the parents, than to the children, as neglecting a moral duty, and so acting unbecoming the relation they stand in to them. Thus concerning the description given of the visible church in this answer; we shall now proceed to speak more particularly of it, and accordingly shall consider the former and present constitution and government thereof. And,

I. As to what concerns the state of the Jewish church before the gospel-dispensation; this was erected in the wilderness, and the laws by which it was governed, were given by God, and transmitted to Israel by the hand of Moses. There was a very remarkable occurrence preceding their being settled

\* *Vid. Cypri. de Laps. cap. 1. § 13.*

as a church, that we read of, *Exod. xix. 7, 8.* in which God demanded an explicit consent from the whole congregation, to be his people, and to be governed by those laws he should give them, upon which they made a public declaration, that *all that the Lord hath spoken we will do.* And *Moses returns the words of the people unto the Lord.* And soon after this there was another covenant-transaction between God and them, mentioned in a following chapter, when *Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all his judgments; and the people answered with one voice, saying, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.* And this was confirmed by sacrifice, and *he took half the blood thereof, and put it in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar, and he took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people; upon which they repeat their engagement, all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.* And then *he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words,* *Exod. xxiv. 3, 5—9.* and then we have an account of an extraordinary display which they had of the divine glory, *They saw the God of Israel, and did eat and drink,* *ver. 11.* which was a farther confirming this covenant. And upon some important occasions they renewed this covenant with God, *avouched him to be their God,* and he condescended at the same time *to avouch them to be his peculiar people,* *Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.* Thus they were settled in a church-relation by God's appointment, and their solemn covenant and consent to be his people.

After this we read of God's settling the form of their church-government, appointing those various ordinances and institutions which are contained in the ceremonial law, and settling a ministry among them, and giving directions concerning every branch of the work that was to be performed by them. Aaron and his sons had the priesthood committed to them, who were to offer gifts and sacrifices; the High-Priest was to be chief minister in holy things, the other priests assistants to him in most branches of his office; and when the temple was built, and the service to be performed therein established, the priests attended in their respective courses, each course entering on their ministry every Sabbath, *2 Chron. xxiii. 4.* and there being twenty-four courses, *1 Chron. xxiv.* it came to their respective turns twice every year. The porters also, who were to wait continually at the avenues of the temple day and night, to prevent any unclean person or thing from coming into it, as well as its being plundered of the treasures that were laid up in chambers adjoining to it; these also ministered in their courses, the number whereof was the same with that of the priests, *1 Chron. xxiii. 5.* compared with chap. xxvi. And the singers,

who attended some parts of the worship, ministered in their courses, 1 Chron. xxiii. 5. compared with chap. xxv.

And besides these, there were some appointed to represent the people, who were chosen to come up from their respective places of abode with the priests when they ministered in their courses; these are called *stationary men*. Dr. Lightfoot\* gives an account of them from some Jewish writers who treat on this subject; not that we have any mention of them in scripture; but they suppose that it took its rise from that law in Lev. i. 3, 4. where they who brought an *offering to the Lord* were obliged to be present, and to *put their hands on the head* thereof, as well as the priests, who had the main concern in this service. From hence it is inferred, that since, besides the sacrifices that were offered for particular persons, there were daily sacrifices offered in the behalf of the whole congregation; and because it was impossible for them to be present to bear a part in this service, it was necessary that some should be deputed to represent the whole body of the people, that so there might be a number present to assist in this service, that these acts of worship might be performed in the most public manner; and inasmuch as this was to be performed daily, it was necessary that some should be deputed, whose proper business it was to attend; and he thinks that as there were priests deputed to minister in their courses, so there was a number deputed to represent the people, who went up to Jerusalem with the priests of the respective course. And he farther adds, that at the same time that these were ministering in the temple, the people met together, and spent that week in those synagogues which were near the place of their abode, in fasting, and other acts of religious worship, in which, though at a distance, they implored a blessing on the service that their brethren were performing.

As for the rest of the people, they were obliged to be present at Jerusalem, at the solemn and public festival, performed three times a year; and others of them, who had committed any sin that was to be expiated by sacrifice, were to come up thither to the temple at other times, and bring their sacrifices to atone for the guilt which they had contracted.

If it be said, that this was, indeed, a solemn method of worship, exceeding beautiful, and also had a circumstance in it, which was its glory, *viz.* that the temple-service was typical of Christ, and the way of salvation by him: but what methods were there to instruct the people in the doctrines of religion? It would not much conduce thereunto for them to come up to Jerusalem, to worship at the three yearly festivals: how did they spend their Sabbaths? or, what acts of worship were they engaged in, in their respective places of abode?

\* See his Works, Vol. I. page 924, 925.



To this we answer, that God also appointed a sufficient number to be their ministers in holy things, helpers of their faith as to this matter, viz. not only the priests, but the whole tribe of Levi, whose place of residence was conveniently situated: they had forty-eight cities in various parts of the land; some of which were not far distant from any of the people. These instructed them in the way of God, the people *sought the knowledge* hereof *from their mouths*, Mal. ii. 7. And there were, besides the temple, several other places appointed for religious worship: these were of two sorts, namely,

1. The *synagogues*, which were generally built in cities, of which hardly any were without them, if they consisted of a number of persons who were able to erect them, and had leisure, from their secular employments, to preside over, and set forward, the work to be performed therein; \* and that was of a different nature from the temple-service, in which gifts and sacrifices were to be offered, God having expressly forbidden the erecting any altars elsewhere; therefore the worship performed in them was prayers, reading and expounding the law and the prophets, and instructing the people in all other duties of religion, which were necessary to be performed in the conduct of their lives.

The manner of doing this, was not only by delivering set discourses, agreeable to our common methods of preaching, Acts xiii. 15. and seq. but holding disputations and conferences together about some important matters of religion: thus the apostle Paul *disputed in the synagogues*, chap. xvii. 17, 19, 8. This was done occasionally; but the Jews met constantly in them for religious worship; and our Saviour encouraged them herein with his presence and instructions: thus it is said, not only that *he taught in their synagogues*, but that this was his constant practice; for it is said, *He came to Nazareth; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read*, Luke iv. 15, 16.

And there were also certain officers appointed over every synagogue: thus we read sometimes of the *rulers of the synagogues*, Mark v. 22. Luke viii. 41, 49. whose business was to prevent the doing any thing that was indecent and disorderly; and there were some persons from whom a word of exhortation was expected, who were called, chap. iv. 20. ministers thereof.† And we are not to suppose that this method of pro-

\* These were called כְּתָנִים *Otioni*. See *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. I. page 610—613. & *Vivring. de Synag. Vet.* page 530, & seq. And *Lightfoot* says, from one of the *Talmuds*, that there were no less than 460 synagogues in Jerusalem, Vol. I. page 363, 370. and that the land was full of them; in which they met every Sabbath, and some other days of the week.

† See more of this in those pages of *Lightfoot* before referred to.

moting religion in the synagogues, was only practised in the last and most degenerate age of the Jewish church, but that they had their synagogues in the more early and purer ages thereof, which, if we had no express account of in the Old Testament, yet it might be inferred from this account thereof in our Saviour's time; for certainly there were no methods used then by the Jews to instruct the people in matters of religion, that were not as necessary, and consequently in use, in foregoing ages. It is true, we do not oftentimes read of synagogues in the Old Testament; notwithstanding there is mention of them in that scripture, before referred to, in Psal. lxxiv. 8. in which the Psalmist complains, that *they had burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land*; where the word being in the plural number, it cannot be meant, as the Chaldee Paraphrast renders it, of the temple. This appears from the context, in which he speaks of the *enemies of God roaring in the midst of the congregations*; and, besides this, he expressly mentions their burning the temple, by *casting fire into the sanctuary of God, and casting down the dwelling-place of his name to the ground*, in ver. 3, 7.

2. Besides these synagogues, there were other places, in which public worship was performed, called, Places of prayer,\* Mr. Mede gives an account, from Epiphanius, of the difference that there was between these and the synagogues, when he says, that a proseucha, or a place appointed for prayer, was a plot of ground, encompassed with a wall, or some other like mound, or inclosure, open above, much like to our courts; whereas a synagogue was a covered edifice as our houses and churches are. He also adds, that the former of these were generally fixed in places without the cities, in the fields, in places of retirement; and that they were generally rendered more private, and fit for the work that was to be performed in them, by being surrounded with a plantation of trees; and he supposes, that these were not only made use of in our Saviour's and the apostles time, but in foregoing ages; and that the grove that Abraham is said to have planted, in *which he called on the name of the Lord*, Gen. xxi. 33. was nothing else but one of these convenient places, planted for that purpose, in which public worship was performed, which seems very probable.†

And we read, in scripture concerning *high places*. These, as Lightfoot observes,‡ are sometimes used in scripture, in a commendable sense: thus Samuel is said to *go up* to one of these *high places*, 1 Sam. ix. 19. to perform some acts of religious worship; and we read of another high place, in which there was a

\* Προευχαι, Proseuchæ. Ἐκκλησιæ, προσευχίαι, Oratoria.

† See Mede's Works, Vol. I. Book I. Disc. 8.

‡ See Vol. I. page 608.

*company of prophets, with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp before them, and they did prophesy*, chap. x. 5. It is true, in other scriptures, we read of them as abused by that idolatry that was performed in them, 1 Kings xi. 7. chap. xii. 31. These the pious kings of Judah, who reformed religion, took away; and when it is said, in some of their reigns, that how much soever they destroyed idolatrous worship, yet *the high places were not taken away*, 2 Kings xii. 3. xiv. 4. xv. 4. that learned writer thinks, that they should not have been destroyed, as places of worship, or public assemblies, and therefore that this is not reckoned as a blemish in the reign of these kings, that the high places were not taken away; for whatever abuse there was, it consisted in that sacrifice and incense were offered there, which were parts of worship confined to the temple; so that if they had not only reformed them from the abuse of those that exercised their idolatry therein; but had also proceeded to reform this abuse of sacrificing there, they might lawfully have met there to perform religious worship, which, it is supposed, they did in synagogues, high places, and groves, that were appointed for that purpose: thus then they met together for religious worship in other places besides the synagogues.

Again, we read, in the New Testament, that *Paul went, on the Sabbath day, out of the city of Philippi, by a river-side, where prayer was wont to be made*, Acts xvi. 13. where he also preached the word by which Lydia was converted; this some think to be one of those places where they resorted for prayer, and other public worship: and others suppose, that the place mentioned in the gospel, which our Saviour resorted to, when it is said, that he *went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God*, Luke vi. 12. ought to be rendered, *in that particular place where prayer was wont to be made to God*.\* But the Greek words may as well be rendered as they are in our translation; and then it has no respect to any particular place of prayer, but imports his retirement to perform this duty. Thus we have endeavoured to prove, that the church of the Jews had other places in which worship was performed, besides the temple, which was of very great advantage for the propagating religion among them. We might have farther proceeded to consider their church-censures, ordained by God for crimes committed, whereby persons were cut off from among their people, by excommunication, when the crimes they were guilty of did not deserve death: but I shall not enlarge any farther on this head, but proceed to speak concerning the gospel-church, and so consider,

II. The methods taken, in order to the first planting and increase thereof, by the apostles. When our Saviour had finished

\* *Et in montem ibat ut oraret, in braseutha Dei.*



the work of redemption, after his resurrection, he altered the form of the church, and appointed his apostles not only to signify this to the world, but to be instruments in erecting this new church. We have before considered these apostles as qualified to be witnesses to Christ's resurrection, and also as having received a commission from him to preach the gospel to all nations, and an order to tarry at Jerusalem till they received those extraordinary gifts from the Holy Ghost, that were necessary for their performing the work they were to engage in. Now, pursuant hereunto, they all of them resided at Jerusalem; and, a few days after Christ's ascension into heaven, the Holy Ghost was poured upon them *on the day of Pentecost*, Acts ii. 1, 2. upon which, they immediately began to exercise their public ministry in that city, in which they had the advantage of publishing the gospel to a numerous concourse of people, who resorted thither, from various parts of the world, in which the Jews were dispersed, to celebrate that festival. Some suppose, that there was a greater number gathered together in that city, than was usual, it being one of those three feasts to which the Jews resorted from all parts of the land: though a learned writer\* supposes, that the Jews were not obliged to come to this feast from other nations; neither were they, that came there, said, as these are, to dwell at Jerusalem; therefore he thinks that that which brought them here from the several parts of the world, was the expectation which the Jews generally had, that the Messiah would appear, and erect a temporal kingdom, and that Jerusalem was the place where he would fix his throne, and therefore they would be there to wait on him, and share the honours they expected from him.

But, whatever occasion brought them here, it was a seasonable opportunity for the gospel first to be preached; and accordingly Peter preached his first sermon to a multitude that were gathered together, and therein exercised the gift of tongues, by which means his discourse was not only understood by men of different languages; but they had herein a plain proof that he was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and he takes occasion to improve this amazing dispensation of providence, by telling them that it was an accomplishment of what had been before predicted by the prophet Joel: and then he preached Christ to them, declaring that he, and the rest of the apostles, were all witnesses that God raised him from the dead, and exalted him by his right-hand, and that, pursuant hereunto, this extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost was conferred on them.

The success of his first sermon was very remarkable; for there were added to the church, as the first-fruits of his minis-

\* See *Lightfoot on Acts ii. 3. Vol. I. page 751, 752.*

try, *three thousand souls*, ver. 41, 47. We also read, that *the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved*; and, soon after this it is said, that *the number of the men*, of whom the church consisted, *was about five thousand*, chap. iv. 4. a very large and numerous church, meeting, as is more than probable, in the same city, where we must conclude, that they fixed their abode, rather than that they returned to the respective places from whence they came, that they might have an opportunity to sit under the sound of the gospel, which was, at that time, preached no where else; and that which makes this more probable, may be inferred from the method taken for their subsistence in the world; there would have been no occasion for those who had possessions to sell them, and dispose of the price thereof to supply the exigences of their fellow-members, had they not removed their habitations, and forsook all for the sake of the gospel.

This church had wonderful instances of the presence of God among them, which did more than compensate for the loss they must be supposed to sustain, as to their secular affairs. We read, for some after this, of little else but success attending the gospel, and persecutions raised by the Jews against it, which rather tended to their own shame and confusion, than the extirpating of it; and when they so far prevailed, at length, that, after the death of Stephen, the first martyr, a new persecution was begun, by the instigation of Saul, (as yet not converted to the faith) the consequence hereof being the *scattering of this church throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria*, chap. viii. 1. this was ordered for the furtherance of the gospel, for wherever they came, they preached, and many believed: but the apostles, at the same time, obeying the order that was before given them, continued at Jerusalem, chap. i. 4. and there still remained a church in that city sitting under their ministry. This was wisely ordered, by the providence of God, not only as an accomplishment of those predictions that respected the gospel's first being sounded from thence, but that, in this church, a sufficient number might be trained up for the exercise of the ministry in other places, when there should be occasion for it; and, in order hereto, they had some advantages which no schools of learning could afford them, for they had the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost. Here it was that the prophets and evangelists were first raised up, being immediately taught by God. This was the first scene of the gospel-church. Here it continued till the apostles were ordered, by the Holy Ghost, to travel into those parts of the world, in which, by his direction, their ministry was to be exercised: the greatest part of them were ordered to those places, where some of the Jews resided; but Paul was ordained

to exercise his ministry among the Gentiles. Accordingly we read, that *the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*, Acts xiii. 2. This divine command they immediately obeyed; and then we read of churches erected in various parts of the world by his ministry, who is styled, *The apostles of the Gentiles*.

There are several things observable in the exercise of his ministry :

1. Wherever he came he preached the gospel, and confirmed it by miracles, as occasion served; and this was attended with such wonderful success and expedition, that, without a remarkable hand of providence going along with him, the multitudes that were converted by his ministry, exceeded not only what might be done by one man, in the compass of his life, but several ages of men. At one time we read of him exercising his ministry from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19. at other times, in several parts of Asia Minor; then in Spain, and at Rome, and some parts of Greece, ver. 28. so that, wherever he came, his ministry was attended with wonderful success, as the Roman emperor says, *I came, I saw, I conquered*.

2. When the apostle had, by the success of his ministry, prepared fit materials for a church, inasmuch as it would take up too much of his time to reside among them till they were provided with a pastor, and other officers, which were necessary to carry on the work that was begun in it, he sent for one of the Evangelists, who, as was before observed, were fitted for this service, by those extraordinary gifts, which they had received, while they continued in the church at Jerusalem. The office of these evangelists seems to have been principally this; that they were to *set in order the things that were wanting*, or left, by the apostles to be done, and *ordain elders in every city*, as the apostle Paul intimates, when giving this charge to Titus, Titus i. 5. who appears to have been an Evangelist, particularly ordained to minister to him, to build upon the foundation he had laid. These evangelists appear to have had all the qualifications for the ministry that the apostles had, excepting what respected their having seen Jesus, whereby they were qualified to be witnesses of his resurrection; and they continued till they had performed that part of their work, in settling pastors, and other officers in churches; and then they were ready to obey another call, to succeed the apostles in some other places, and so perform the same work there.

3. While the apostles were thus concerned for the gathering and building up of churches, and were assisted herein by the evangelists, there was a continual intercourse between them and those churches, whose first rise was owing to the success



of their ministry. Accordingly they conversed with them by epistles; some of which they received by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, as designed to be a rule of the churches faith in all succeeding ages. Some of these epistles were written by other apostles, but most of them by Paul, Phil. ii. 19. who sometimes desires to *know their state*; at other times, he informs them of *his own*, and the opposition he met with; or the success of his ministry, the persecution he was exposed to for it, Coloss. iv. 7. 2 Cor. i. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 9. and the necessity of the churches, which required their contribution for their support; and therein he often enlarges on those important truths, which, had he been among them, would have been the subject of his ministry. This was necessary to strengthen their hands and encourage them to persevere in that faith which they made profession of.

And to this we may add, that there were, upon several occasions, messengers sent from the churches to the apostle, to inform him of their state, to transmit to him those contributions which were necessary for the relief of other churches, and to give him that countenance, encouragement, and assistance, that his necessities required; and some of these were very excellent persons, the best that could be chosen out of the church for that service. The apostle calls some of them, *The messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. which is an extraordinary character. Some think, he intends hereby that they were the messengers of those churches, which churches are the glory of Christ, that is, the seat in which he displays his glory; others suppose, that he calls these messengers, *the glory of Christ*, as they, by their wise and faithful conduct, promoted his glory, which was not dependent on it, but illustrated thereby. Sometimes they were ministers of churches, sent occasionally on these errands: thus Epaphroditus was a *messenger and minister of the church at Philippi*, Phil. ii. 25. and Onesiphorus was sent to strengthen and encourage the hands of the apostle, when he was a prisoner at Rome, whom he speaks of with great affection, when he says, *He sought me out diligently, and found me, and was not ashamed of my chain*, 2 Tim. i. 16, 17. These were very useful persons to promote the interest of Christ, which was carrying on by the apostle, though it does not appear that this was a standing office in the church, their service being only occasional. Thus we have considered the apostle, as engaged in gathering and building up churches, in such a way, as was peculiar to them in the first age of the gospel.

III. We shall now proceed to speak concerning that state and government of the church, that was designed to continue longer than the apostolic age, and is a rule to the churches of

Christ in our day. We have before considered the evangelists as succeeding the apostles, in appointing officers over churches, directing them to fit persons, that might be called to this service, and instructing them how they should behave themselves in that relation; which was necessary, in that they were not to expect such extraordinary assistances from the Spirit of God, as the apostles and the evangelists had received, any more than pastors, and other church-officers are to expect them in our day; which leads us to consider the nature, constitution, and government of the churches of Christ, in all the ages thereof. And,

1. What we are to understand by a particular church, and what is the foundation thereof. A church is a number of visible professors, called to be saints, or, at least, denominated, and, by a judgment of charity, esteemed to be saints; united together by consent, in order to their having communion with one another; and testifying their subjection to Christ, and hope of his presence in all his ordinances; designing hereby to glorify his name, propagate his gospel and interest in the world, and promote their mutual edification in that holy faith, which is founded on the scripture revelation; and in order hereunto they are obliged to call and set over them such pastors, and other officers, as God has qualified for that service, to be helpers of their faith, and to endeavour to promote their order, whereby the great and valuable ends of the church-communion may be answered, and God therein be glorified. This description of a particular church is agreeable to, and founded on scripture, as may be easily made appear, by referring to several scriptures in the New Testament, relating to this matter. Accordingly we read that the members of Christ are characterized as saints by calling, or *called to be saints*, Rom. i. 7. and the churches in Macedonia are said *to give their own selves to the Lord and to the apostles, by the will of God*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. to sit under their ministry, and follow their directions, so far as they imparted to them the mind of Christ, and might be helpers of their faith and order, to his glory; and we read of their professed *subjection unto the gospel of Christ*, chap. ix. 13. and the church at Ephesus is farther described, as *built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets*, namely, the doctrines laid down by them, as the only rule of faith and obedience, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*. And as to what respects their duty towards one another, they are farther said *to build up themselves in their most holy faith, and to keep themselves in the love of God*, that is, to do every thing by the divine assistance, that is necessary in order thereunto, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*, Jude, ver. 20, 21. or, as it is said elsewhere,

*to consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, Heb. x. 24, 25.* inasmuch as this is an instituted means for the answering of that great end. Many other scriptures might have been brought to the same purpose, tending to prove and illustrate the description of a gospel-church, as above-mentioned.

But this may be also evinced, in a method of reasoning from the laws of society, as founded on the law of nature, and applied to a religious society, which takes its rise from, and is built on divine revelation; and, in order hereunto, we shall lay down the following propositions.

(1.) It is agreeable to the law of nature, and the whole tenor of scripture, that God should be glorified by social worship, and that all the members of these worshipping societies should endeavour to promote the spiritual interest of one another. Man is, by the excellency of his nature, fitted for conversation, and, by his relation to others, who have the same capacities and qualifications, obliged hereunto; and, as the glory of God is the end of his being, it ought to be the end of all those intercourses, which we have with one another; and, as divine worship is the highest instance of our glorifying God, so we are, as intelligent creatures, obliged to worship him in a social way.

(2.) It is the great design of Christianity to direct us how this social worship should be performed by us as Christians, paying a due regard to the gospel, and the glory of the divine perfections, as displayed therein, which is the subject-matter of divine revelation, especially that part thereof from whence the laws of christian society are taken.

(3.) They who have been made partakers of the grace of God, are obliged, out of gratitude to him, the Author thereof, to proclaim his glory to the world; and as the experience thereof, and the obligations persons are laid under hereby, is extended to others, as well as ourselves; so all, who are under like engagements, ought to be helpers of the faith and joy of each other, and to promote their mutual edification and salvation; and, that this may be done,

(4.) It is necessary that they consent, or agree, to have communion with one another in those duties in which they express their subjection to Christ, and desire to wait on him together in all his holy institutions.

(5.) The rule for their direction herein, is contained in scripture, which sets forth the Mediator's glory, as King of saints; gives a perfect directory for gospel worship, and encouragement to hope for his presence therein, whereby it may be attended with its desired success.



(6.) Since Christ, in scripture, has described some persons as qualified to assist and direct us in this matter, as well as called them to this service, it is necessary that these religious societies should choose and appoint such to preside over them, who are styled pastors, after his own heart, that may feed them with knowledge and understanding, whereby his ordinances may be rightly administered, and the ends of church-communion answered, to his glory, and their mutual advantage.

In this method of reasoning, the constitution of churches appears to be agreeable to the law of nature: nevertheless, we are not to suppose with the Erastians, and others, that the church is wholly founded on the laws of civil society, as though Christ had left no certain rule by which it was to be governed, besides those that are common to all societies, as an expedient to maintain peace and order among them; for there are other ends to be answered by church-communion, which are more immediately conducive to the glory of Christ and the promoting revealed religion, which the law of nature, and those laws of society, which are founded thereon, can give us no direction in. It is a great dishonour to Christ, the King and Head of his church, to suppose that he has left it without a rule to direct them, in what respects the communion of saints; as much as it would be to assert that he has left it without a rule of faith. If God was so particular in giving directions concerning every part of that worship that was to be performed in the church before Christ's coming, so that they are not, on pain of his highest displeasure, to deviate from it, certainly we must not think that our Saviour has neglected to give these laws, by which the gospel-church is to be governed, which are distinct from what are contained in the law of nature.

And, from hence, it may be inferred, that no church, or religious society of Christians, has power to make laws for its own government, in those things that appertain to, or are to be deemed a part of religious worship: I don't say a church has no power to appoint some discretionary rules to be observed by those who are of the same communion, provided they are kept within due bounds, and Christ's Kingly office be not hereby invaded. There is a very great controversy in the world, about the church's power to decree some things that are styled indifferent; but persons are not generally agreed in determining what they mean by indifferent things. Some hereby understand those rites and ceremonies that are used in religious matters, which they call indifferent, because they are of less importance; whereas, by being made terms of communion, they cease to be indifferent; and whether they are of greater or less importance, yet if they respect a necessary mode of wor-

ship, conducive to the glory of God, so that hereby he is more honoured than he would be, by the neglect of it, this is to carry the idea of indifference too far, and to extend the power of the church beyond its due bounds: for as the terms of communion are only to be fixed by Christ, and the means by which he is to be glorified, (which have in them the nature of ordinances, wherein we hope for his presence and blessing) must be sought for from him; so the church has not power to ordain, or give a sanction to them, without his warrant; therefore, when we speak of those indifferent matters, which the church has power to appoint, we mean those things which are no part of religious worship, but merely discretionary, which may be observed, or not, without any guilt contracted, or censure ensuing hereupon; which leads us to consider,

2. The matter of a church, or the character of those persons who are qualified for church-communion. We have already considered the church as a religious society; it is therefore necessary that all the members thereof embrace the true religion, and, in particular, that they deny none of those fundamental articles of faith, which are necessary to salvation. It is not to be supposed that the members of any society have a perfect unanimity in their sentiments about all religious matters, for that is hardly to be expected in this world; but they are obliged, as the apostles says, *to hold the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God*, Col. ii. 19. and publicly to avow, or maintain, no doctrine subversive of the foundation on which the church is built. Revealed religion centres in Christ, and is referred to his glory, as Mediator; therefore every member of a church ought to profess their faith in him, and willingness to own him, as their Lord and Law-giver, and to give him the glory that is due to him, as a divine Person, and as one who is appointed to execute the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. The apostle gives a short, but very comprehensive description of those who are fit matter for a church, when he says, *We are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh*, Phil. iii. 3. It follows, from hence, that every religious society is not a church; for false religions have been propagated among the Heathen, and others, in distinct societies of those who performed religious worship; but yet they had no relation to Christ, and therefore not reckoned among his churches.

On the other hand, we cannot determine concerning every member of a particular church, that his heart is right with God: for that is a prerogative that belongs only to the Searcher of hearts; it is the external profession that is our rule of judg-

ing. All are not in a state of salvation, who are church-members; as the apostle says, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel*, Rom. ix. 6. He makes a distinction between a real subjection unto Christ by faith, and a professed subjection to him: as he says, concerning the church of the Jews, *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God*, chap. ii. 28, 29. nevertheless, they were all church-members, professedly or apparently devoted to God. Concerning such, we are bound, by a judgment of charity, to conclude, that they are what they profess themselves to be, till their conversation plainly gives the lye to their profession. The visible church is compared to the *net*, that had *good and bad fish* in it, Matt. xiii. 47. or to the *great house*, in which are *vessels* of various kinds; *some to honour, and some to dishonour*, 2 Tim. ii. 20. some fit for the master's use, others to be broken, as *vessels wherein is no pleasure*, Jer. xxii. 28. some are sincere, others hypocrites: nevertheless, till their hypocrisy is made manifest, they are supposed to be fit matter for a church.

3. We are now to consider the form, or bond of union, whereby they are incorporated into a society, and so denominated a church of Christ. It is neither the profession of faith, nor a conversation agreeable thereunto, that constitutes a person a member of a particular church; for, according to the laws of society, there must be a mutual consent to walk together, to have communion one with another in all the ordinances which Christ has established. As the materials, of which a building consists, do not constitute that building, unless they are cemented and joined together; so the union of professing Christians, whereby they are joined together, and become one body, by mutual consent, is necessary to constitute them a church, as much as their professed subjection to Christ to denominate them a church of Christ. Hereby they become a confederate body; and as every one, in a private capacity, was before engaged to perform those duties which are incumbent on all men, as Christians, now they bring themselves, pursuant to Christ's appointment, under an obligation to endeavour, by the assistance of divine grace, to walk becoming the relation they stand in to each other; or, as the apostle expresses himself, *Building up themselves on their most holy faith*, Jude, ver. 20. whereby the ends of Christian society may be answered, and the glory of Christ secured; and they have ground to expect his presence in waiting on him in all his holy institutions. By this means they, who were before considered as fit matter for it, are said to be united together, as a church of Christ. But, inasmuch as



this principally respects the foundation, or erection of churches; there are other things necessary for their increase, and the maintaining that purity, which is the glory thereof, and thereby preventing their contracting that guilt which would otherwise ensue; which leads us to consider,

4. The power which he has given them, and the rules which he has laid down, which are to be observed by them in the admission to, and exclusion of persons from church-communion; And,

(1.) As to what respects the admission of members, that may fill up the places of those, whose relation to them is dissolved by death. Here we must consider, that it is highly reasonable that they should have all the satisfaction that is necessary, concerning the fitness of those for it, who are to be admitted into church-communion; and also enquire what terms, or conditions, are to be insisted on, and complied with, in order thereunto. We must not suppose that these are arbitrary, or such as a church shall please to impose; for it is no more in their power to make terms of communion, than it is to make a rule of faith, or worship. In this, a church differs from a civil society, where the terms of admission into it are arbitrary, provided they do not interfere with any of the laws of God, or man: but the terms of Christian communion are fixed by Christ, the Head of his church; and therefore no society of men have a right to make the door of admission into their own communion straighter or wider than Christ has made it.

This is a matter in which some of the reformed churches differ among themselves, though the dissention ought not to arise so high as to cause any alienation of affection, or any degree of uncharitableness, so as to occasion any to think, that because they do not, in all things, agree, as to this matter, therefore they ought to treat one another as those who hold the head, and are designing to advance the interest of Christ, in the various methods they are pursuing, in order thereunto. I think it is allowed, by most of the churches of Christ, at least those who suppose that persons have no right to church-communion, without the consent of that particular society, of which any one is to be made a member, that nothing short of a professed subjection to Christ, and a desire to adhere to him in all his offices, as well as worship him in all his ordinances, can be reckoned a term of church-communion. For we suppose the church to be built upon this foundation; and nothing short of it can sufficiently set forth the glory of Christ, as the Head thereof, or to answer the valuable ends of church-communion. Therefore it follows from hence, that as ignorance of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, disqualifies for church-communion; so do immoralities in conversation, both of which de-

nominate a person to be alienated from the life of God, a stranger to the covenant of promise, and in subjection to Satan, the god of this world, which is inconsistent with a professed subjection to Christ. Therefore a mind rightly informed in the great doctrines of the gospel, with a conduct of life answerable thereunto, is to be insisted on, as a term of church-communion.

But that in which the sentiments of men are different, is with respect to the way and manner in which this is to be rendered visible, and whether some things that are merely circumstantial, are to be insisted on, as terms of communion.

1st, As to the former of these. That those qualifications, which are necessary to church-communion, ought to be, some way or other, made visible, this is taken for granted by many on both sides; and, indeed, without it the church could not be called *visible*, or a society of such as profess the true religion, and, together with it, their subjection to Christ. And, this, in a more especial manner, must be made known to them, who are to hold communion with them, as called to be saints; which cannot, from the nature of the thing, be done, unless it be, some way or other made to appear. If it be said, that there is no occasion for this to be explicit, or the profession hereof to be made any otherwise, than as their relation to a church denominates them to be visible professors; this is only a presumptive evidence that they are so, and does not sufficiently distinguish them from the world, especially from that part of it, which makes an outward shew of religion, and attend on several branches of public worship. This is certainly very remote from the character given of all those churches which we have an account of in the New Testament, concerning some of whom the apostle says, that *their faith* was not only known to that particular society to which they belonged, but it was *spread abroad, or spoken of, throughout the whole world*, 1 Thes. i. 8. compared with Rom. i. 8. This it could never have been, if they, who were more immediately concerned to know it, had received no other conviction than what is the result of their joining with them in some external acts of worship.

And it may also be inferred, from what is generally allowed, by those who explain the nature of the Lord's supper, which is a church-ordinance, and lay down the qualifications of those who are deemed fit to partake of it; particularly that they are under an obligation to examine themselves, not only concerning their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, but their faith to feed on him, their repentance, love, and new obedience, trusting in his mercy, and rejoicing in his love; and they assert the necessity of their renewing the exercise of those graces, which may render them meet for this ordinance.\* And

\* See Quest. CLXX. CLXXIV.

this is consonant to the practice of many of the reformed churches, who will not admit any into their communion, without receiving satisfaction, as to their having these qualifications for this ordinance. And, since the matter in controversy with them principally respects the manner in which this is to be given, and the concern of the church herein, we may take occasion to infer, from hence, that there is the highest reason that the church should receive satisfaction, as well as those who preside over it; inasmuch as they are obliged, in conscience, to have communion with them, and reckon them among the number of those who have been made partakers of the grace of Christ, which they cannot well be said to do, unless this be, some way or other, made visible to them; which leads us to consider,

2dly, The manner in which this profession is to be made visible, namely, whether it is to be done by every one in his own person; or a report hereof by another in his name, may be deemed sufficient. This I can reckon no other than a circumstance; and therefore one of these ways is not so far to be insisted on, as that a person should be denied this privilege, (whose qualifications for it are not to be questioned) because he is unwilling to comply with it, as thinking that the main end designed thereby may be as effectually answered by the other. If a person be duly qualified, as the apostle says concerning Timothy, to *make a good profession before many witnesses*, 1 Tim. vi. 12. and this may not only have a tendency to answer the end of giving satisfaction to them, but be an expedient, in an uncommon degree, to promote their edification; if he have something remarkable to impart, and desire to bear his testimony to the grace of God, which he has experienced, in his own person, and thereby to induce others to join with him in giving him the glory of it, there is no law of God, or nature that prohibits, or forbids him to do it; nor ought this to be censured, as though it could not be done, without its being liable to the common imputation, as though pride must be the necessary inducement leading him thereunto; for that is such an instance of censure and reproach, as is unbecoming Christians, especially when it is alleged as an universal exception against it. Nevertheless, I am far from pleading for this, as a necessary term of communion; nor do I think that a person's desire to give the church satisfaction, in such a way, ought always to be complied with; since whatever occasion some may suppose they have for it, all are not fit to do it, in such a way, as may tend to the church's edification. There are various other ways by which a church may know, that those who are proposed to its communion have a right to it, which I forbear to mention; but one of them is not to be so far insisted on, as that



a bare refusal to comply with it rather than another, provided the general end be answered, should debar a person otherwise qualified for it, from church-communion. The church being thus satisfied, he is joined to it by their consent, and is hereby laid under equal engagements with them, to walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless. And this leads us to consider,

(2.) The exclusion of members from church-communion. This is agreeable to the laws of society, as well as their admission into it; and hereby a becoming zeal is expressed for the glory of God, and a public testimony given against those who discover the insincerity of their professed subjection to Christ, which was the ground and reason of their being admitted into that relation, which now they appear to have forfeited, this leads us to consider,

*First*, That the church has a right to exclude those from its communion who appear to be unqualified for it, or a reproach to it; under which head, I cannot but take notice of the opinion of the Erastians, that a church has no power, distinct from the civil government, to exclude persons from its communion. This was advanced by Erastus, a physician in Germany, soon after the beginning of the reformation: and that, which seems to have given occasion hereunto, was the just prejudice which he entertained against the Popish doctrine, concerning the independency of the church upon the state; which was then, and is at this day, maintained, and abused to such a degree, that if a clergyman insults the government, and sets himself at the head of a rebellion against his lawful prince, or is guilty of any other enormous crimes, he flies to the church for protection, and generally finds it there, especially if the king should, in any respect, disoblige them, or refuse to lay his crown at their feet, if they desire it: this, I say, was a just prejudice, which gave the first rise to this opinion, in which, opposing one extreme the first founder of it ran into another.

The argument, by which it is generally supported, is, that this tends to erect, or set up one government in another:\* but this is not contrary to the law of nature and nations, when a smaller government is not co-ordinate with the other, but allowed and protected by it: the government of a family or corporation, must be acknowledged, by all, to be a smaller government included in a greater; but will any one deny that these are inconsistent with it? May not a master admit into, or exclude, whom he pleases from being members of his family? or a corporation make those by-laws, by which it is governed, without being supposed to interfere with the civil government? And, by a parity of reason, may not a church, pursuant not

\* *Imperium in imperio*

only to the laws of society, but the rule which Christ has given, exclude members from its communion, without being supposed to subvert the fundamental laws of civil government? We do not deny, but that if the church should pretend to inflict corporal punishments on its members, or make use of the civil sword which is committed into the hand of the magistrate; or if it should act contrary to the laws of Christ, by defending, encouraging, or abetting those who are enemies to the civil government, or excluding them from those privileges, which the laws of the land give them a right to; this would be a notoriously unwarrantable instance of erecting one government in another, subversive of it: but this is not the design of excommunication, as it is one of those ordinances which Christ has given to his church.

*Secondly,* We are now to consider the causes of inflicting this censure on persons; and these are no other than those things which, had they been before known, would have been a bar to their being admitted to church-communion. And therefore when a person is guilty of those crimes, which, had they been known before, he ought not to have been received; when these are made to appear, he is deemed unqualified for that privilege which he was before admitted to partake of; on which account we generally say, that every one first excludes himself, by being guilty of those crimes that disqualify him for church-communion, before he is to be excluded from it, by the sentence of the church. But that we may be a little more particular on this subject, let us consider,

*1st,* That they who disturb the tranquillity of the church, by the uneasiness of their temper, or who are not only unwilling to comply with the method of its government, but endeavour to make others so: or who are restless in their attempt to bring innovations into it, or propagate doctrines which are contrary to scripture, and the general faith of the church, founded thereon; though these be not directly subversive of the gospel, yet, inasmuch as the persons are not satisfied in retaining their own sentiments, without giving disturbance to others, who cannot adhere to them; such, I think, ought to be separated from the communion of the church, purely out of a principle of self-preservation, though it be not their immediate duty to judge the state, so much as the temper of persons, whom they withdraw from.

*2dly,* If a person propagate a doctrine subversive of the gospel, or that faith on which the church is founded, he is to be excluded. It is such an one, as I humbly conceive, whom the apostle styles an *heretic*, and advises Titus to reject him, and speaks of him as *one that is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself*, Tit. iii. 10, 11. Some think, that the person

here spoken of, is one who pretends to believe one doctrine, but really believes another which is of a most pernicious tendency, and therefore is to be rejected, not for his sentiments, but his insincerity, and, upon this account, he is said to be *self-condemned*\*. But I cannot acquiesce in this sense of the text; for, though there may be some in the world who think, to find their account, gain popular applause, or, some way or other, serve their worldly interest, by pretending to believe those doctrines which they really deny; yet this cannot be truly said of the person, whom the apostle, in this scripture, describes as an *heretic*: he is, indeed, represented as inconsistent with himself; and this is supposed to be known, and alleged, as an aggravation of the charge on which his expulsion from that religious society, of which he was a member, is founded: but did ever any man propagate one doctrine, and tell the world that he believed another, so that he might, for this, be convicted as an hypocrite? And certainly this could not be known without his own confession, and the church could not censure him for it, but upon sufficient evidence. If it be said, that they might know this by divine inspiration, which, it is true, they were favoured with in that age, in which, among other extraordinary gifts, they had that of *discerning of spirits*; it is greatly to be questioned, whether ever they proceeded against any one upon such extraordinary intimations, without some apparent matter of accusation, which was known by those who had not this extraordinary gift; for, if they had a liberty to proceed against persons in such a way, why did not our Saviour reject Judas, who was one of that society that attended on his ministry, when he knew him to be an hypocrite, or *self-condemned*, in a most notorious degree, yet he did not; and the reason, doubtless, was, because he designed that his churches, in succeeding ages, should, in all their judicial proceedings, go upon other evidence, which might easily be known by all, when they expelled any one from their communion.

Besides, if this be the sense of the text, and the ground on which persons are to be rejected, then no one can be known to be self condemned now; for we have no such extraordinary intimations thereof, since miraculous gifts are ceased: and is there any thing instituted as essential to the church's proceedings, in the methods of their government, which could not be put in practice, except in the apostolic age? and, if so, then having recourse to extraordinary discerning of spirits, as a foundation of this procedure, will not serve the purpose for which it is alleged.

It must therefore be concluded, that the person here said to be *self-condemned*, was not deemed so, because he pretended

\* *Αὐτεκατακρίνων.*



to hold that faith which he really denied; but because his present professed sentiments were the reverse of what he had before pretended to hold, which was a term on which he was admitted into the church; and in this sense he is said to be *self-condemned*; as his present errors contained a contradiction to that faith which he then professed, in common with the rest of that society, of which he was admitted a member.

3dly, Persons are to be excluded from church-communion for immoral practices, which not only contradict their professed subjection to Christ, but argue them to be in an unconverted state. When they were first received into the church, they were supposed, by a judgment of charity, to be Christ's subjects and servants: their own profession, which was not then contradicted by any apparant blemishes in their conversation, was the foundation of this opinion, which the church was then bound to entertain concerning them; but, when they are guilty of any crimes, which are contrary to their professed subjection to Christ, the church is to take away the privilege which they had before granted them; for hereby they appear to be disqualified for their communion; and this is necessary, inasmuch as, by it, they express a just detestation of every thing that would be a reproach to them, or an instance of disloyalty to, or rebellion against Christ, their Head and Saviour.

(3.) We are now to speak concerning the method of proceeding in excluding persons from church-communion. We must consider this as a judicial act, and therefore not to be done without trying and judging impartially the merits of the cause. A crime committed is supposed to be first known by particular persons, who are members of the church; or if any injury be done, whereby another has received just matter of offence, he is supposed to be first apprised of it, before it be brought before the church. In this case, our Saviour has expressly given direction concerning the method in which he is to proceed when he says, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother: but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen-man, and a Publican*, Matt. xviii. 15—17. If this scripture be rightly understood, it will give great light to the method of proceeding in this matter.

And here we must consider, that the crime is called a *trespass*, and accordingly is, in some respects, injurious to others, whereby the offender contracts some degree of guilt, which he is to be reprov'd for, otherwise there would be no room for a

private rebuke, or admonition, in order to bring him to repentance; nor, upon his obstinate refusal thereof, would the church have ground to proceed in excluding him from its communion: nevertheless, we are not to suppose the crime to be of such a nature, as is, in itself, inconsistent with a state of grace, or affords matter of open scandal to the Christian name; as if a person were guilty of adultery, theft, or some other notorious crime; for, in this case, it would not be sufficient for the person, who is apprised of it, to give him a friendly and gentle reproof; so that, upon his confessing his fault, and repenting of it, all farther proceedings against him ought to be stopped; for herein, I humbly conceive, that he that has received information concerning it, ought to make it known to the church, that so the matter might not only be fully charged upon him, but his repentance be as visible, as the scandal he has brought to religion, by his crime, has been. If I know a person to be a traitor to his Prince, a murderer, or guilty of any other crime, whereby he has forfeited his life, it is not sufficient for me to reprove him privately for it, in order to bring him to repentance; but I must discover it to proper persons, that he may be brought to condign punishment: So, in this case, if a person be guilty of a crime, that in itself disqualifies for church-communion, and brings a reproach on the ways of God, the church ought to express their public resentment against it, which will tend to secure the honour of religion; and therefore it ought to be brought before them immediately, and they to proceed against him, by excluding him from their communion; though, for the present, he seem to express some degree of sorrow for his crime, as being made public; and if they judge that his repentance is sincere, and the world has sufficient ground to conclude it to be so, then they may express their forgiveness thereof, and so withdraw the censure they have passed upon him.

But, in crimes of a lesser nature than these, a private admonition ought to be given; and if this be to no purpose, but the person go on in sin, whereby it appears to be habitual, and his repentance not sincere, after this, the cause is to be brought before the church; but, in order hereunto, the person that first reproved him, must take one or two more, that they may join in the second reproof; and, if all this be to no purpose, then they are to appear as evidences against him, and the church is to give him a public admonition; and, if this solemn ordinance prove ineffectual, then he is to be excluded, and his exclusion is styled his *being to them as an Heathen-man, or Publican*, that is, they have no farther relation to him any more than they have to the *Heathen or Publicans*, or no immediate care of

him, any otherwise than as they are to desire to know whether this censure be blessed for his advantage. And this leads us,

(4.) To consider the temper with which this censure ought to be denounced, and the consequences thereof, with respect to him that falls under it. The same frame of spirit ought to discover itself in this, as in all other reproofs, for sin committed, in which there ought to be a zeal expressed for the glory of God, and, at the same time, compassion to the souls of them, who have rendered themselves obnoxious to it, without the least degree of hatred redounding to their persons. The crime is to be aggravated in proportion to the nature thereof, that so he that has committed it may be brought under conviction, and be humbled for his sin, and yet he is to be made sensible that his spiritual advantage is intended thereby.

This is very contrary to those methods which were taken in the corrupt state of the Jewish church, who, when they excommunicated persons, denounced several curses against them; and their behaviour consequent thereupon, was altogether unjustifiable. We have an account, in some of their writings, of two degrees of excommunication practised among them, one of which only deprived them of some privileges which that church enjoyed, but not of all. Another carried in it more terror, by reason of several *anathemas* annexed to it, which contained a great abuse and perversion of the design of that law relating to the curses that were to be denounced on mount Ebal, mentioned in Deut. xxvii. which was not given as a form, to be used in excommunication, but to shew them what sin deserved, and that this might be an expedient to prevent those sins, which would expose them to the divine wrath and curse\*. And though they pretend to have a warrant for this from Deborah, and Barak's cursing *Meroz*, Judges v. 23. or Joshua's denouncing a curse upon him that should rebuild *Fericho*, Joshua vi. 26. yet this does not give countenance to their proceedings herein; for we must distinguish between those *anathemas*, which were denounced by immediate divine direction, by some that had the spirit of prophecy, and those curses which were denounced by others who were altogether destitute thereof†.

Moreover, as the Jews, in the degenerate ages of that church, abused the ordinance of excommunication, as above-mentioned; so they discovered such a degree of hatred to those whom

\* The former of these Jewish writers call נרדן *Naddan*; the latter they call חרם *Cherem*, or סנחטין *Sanmathia*, and was performed with several execrations, by which they, as it were, bound them over to suffer both temporal and eternal punishments. See *Lightfoot's Hore* Hebr. & Talmud. in 1 Cor. v. 5.

† See more on this subject in *Vitringa de Synagoga*. Vet. Pag. 745. and also the form used, and the instrument drawn up, when a person was excommunicated and anathematized, in *Selden de Jure Nat. & Gent. Lib. IV. cap. 17* and *Buxi. Lex Talm.* in voce *CHEREM*.



they excommunicated, as ought not to be expressed to the vilest of men. An instance of this we have in their behaviour towards the Samaritans, who, according to the account we have from Jewish writers, were excommunicated in Ezra's time, for building a temple on mount Gerizzim, and setting up corrupt worship there, in opposition to that which ought to have been performed in the temple at Jerusalem. For this they were justly excluded from the Jewish church \*; but their morose behaviour towards them was unwarrantable. That there was an irreconcilable enmity between them, appears from the woman of Samaria's answer to our Saviour, when desiring her to give him water; from whence it is evident that he was far from approving of this behaviour of the Jews towards them: the woman was amazed that he should ask water of her, and hereupon says to him, *How is it, that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*, John iv. 9. that is, they retain that old rancour and prejudice against them, that they will not have any dealings with them which contain the least obligation on either side. These things were consequences of excommunication which they had no ground for in scripture.

As for the Christian church, they seem to have followed the Jews too much in that, in which they are not to be imitated. Hence arose the distinction between the greater and the lesser excommunication, which is agreeable, though expressed in other words, to that which was before mentioned; and those *anathemas*, which were denounced against persons excommunicated by them, how much soever it might have argued their zeal against the crimes they committed, yet it is no example for us to follow. It is beyond dispute, that they endeavour to make this censure as much dreaded as was possible, to deter men from committing those crimes that might deserve it. Tertulian calls it, *An anticipation of the future judgment* †; and Cyprian supposes such an one to be *far from a state of salvation* ‡.

And some have supposed, that persons, when excommunicated, were possessed by the devil, which they conclude to be the sense of the apostle, 1 Cor. v. 5. when he speaks of *delivering such unto Satan* §; and that Satan actually seized, and took possession of them; and that God granted this as an expedient, to strike a terror into the minds of men, to prevent many

\* See an account of the manner of their excommunication, and the curse denounced against them at that time, and the first cause of it, taken from Josephus, and other Jewish writers, in *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. II. Pag. 538—540. and Vol. I. Pag. 599.

† *Vid. Tert. Apol. cap. 39. Summum futuri judicii prajudicium.*

‡ *Vid. Cypr. de Orat. Dom. Timendum est, & orandum, ne dum quis abster tus separatur a Christi corpore, procul remaneat a salute.*

§ *Vid. Cave's Prim. Christ. Part. III. cap. 5.*

sins being committed ; and that this was more necessary at that time, when they were destitute of the assistance of the civil magistrate, who took no care to defend the church, or to punish those crimes that were committed by its members : but I cannot think that there was ever such a power granted to the church, how much soever the necessity of affairs be supposed to require it. We read nothing of it in the writings of those Fathers, who lived in the early ages thereof ; such as Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, or Cyprian, who would, doubtless, have taken some notice of this extraordinary miraculous punishment attending excommunication, had there been any such thing. Some of them, indeed, speak of the church's being favoured, in some instances, with the extraordinary gift of miracles, and particularly that of casting out devils, after the apostles' time ; \* but we have no account of the devil's possessing any, upon their being cast out of the church.

We read, in scripture, of delivering a person excommunicated to Satan, 1 Cor. v. 5. but I cannot think that the apostle intends any more by it, than his being declared to be in Satan's kingdom, that is in the world, where he rules over the children of disobedience ; and, if his crime be so great, as is inconsistent with a state of grace, he must, without doubt, be reckoned a servant of Satan, and, in this sense, be delivered to him. And there is a particular end thereof, mentioned by the apostle, namely, *The destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus* ; so that the person's good is to be intended by it, that he may be humbled, brought to repentance, and afterwards received again into the bosom of the church.

\* Justin Martyr tells the Jews, (*Vid. ejusd. Colloq. cum Tryph.*) that the church, in his time, had the gift of prophecy ; which Eusebius (*in Hist. Eccles. Lib. IV. cap. 17.*) takes notice of, and, doubtless believed it to be true in fact, though it be very much questioned whether there were any such thing in the fourth century, in which he lived. Gregory Nyssen, and Basil, who lived a little after Eusebius, assert, that there were many miracles wrought in the third century, by Gregory of Neo-cæsarea, for which reason he is called *Thaumaturgus* ; though it is not improbable that they might be imposed on in some things, which they relate concerning him, especially when they compare him with the apostles, and ancient prophets, not excepting Moses himself in this respect ; and, it is certain, many things are related, of his miracles, which seem too fabulous to obtain credit ; yet there is ground enough, from all that they say, to suppose that he wrought some, and that therefore, in his time, they were not wholly ceased, (*Vid. Greg. Nyss in cit. Greg. Thaum and Basil de Sp. Sanct. cap. 29.*) And Origen affirms, that, in his time, the Christians had a power to perform many miraculous cures, and to foretell things to come. (*Vid. Lib. I. contr. Cels.*) Και ἐν ἡμῶν τῷ ἀγῶνι τῶν Πνευματικῶν παρὰ χριστιανῶν σαθεῖται ἐκτετατοὶ δαιμονῶν καὶ ποικίλαι ἰατροὶ πηλοῦσι καὶ φασὶν τὰς ἀλλὰ τὸ ἑσθλὸν τὸ λόγῳ περὶ μακάριον. If this had not been true, Celsus, who wanted neither malice, nor a will to oppose, would certainly have detected the fallacy. And Tertullian, (*Vid. Apologet. cap. 23.*) appeals to it for the proof of the Christian religion, offering to lay his life and reputation at stake, if the Christians, when publicly calling upon God, did not cure those who were possessed with devils.

Thus we have considered the general description of a church, the matter and form thereof, and the power granted them of receiving persons into, or excluding them from communion. Now from hence we may infer,

1st, That nearness of habitation, how much soever it may contribute to answer some ends of church-communion, which cannot be attained by those who live many miles distant from each other, is not sufficient to constitute persons church-members, or to give them a right to the privileges that attend such a relation. Parochial churches have no foundation in scripture, for they want both the matter and form of a church; nor are they any other than a human constitution.

2dly The scripture gives no account of the church, as National or Provincial; and therefore, though persons have a right to many civil privileges, as born in particular nations, or provinces, it does not follow from thence, that they are professedly subjects to Christ, or united together in the bonds of the gospel. Therefore if a church, that styles itself National, excludes persons from its communion, whether it be for real or supposed crimes, it takes away that right which it had no power to confer, but what is founded on the laws of men, which are very distinct from those which Christ has given to his churches. And this leads us,

5. To consider the government of the church, by those officers which Christ has appointed therein. Tyranny and anarchy are extremes, inconsistent with the good of civil society, and contrary to the law of nature, and are sufficiently fenced against by the government which Christ has established in his church: he has appointed officers to secure the peace and order thereof, and has limited their power, and given directions that concern the exercise thereof, that so it may be governed without oppression, its religious rights maintained, the glory of God, and the mutual edification of its members hereby promoted.

We have already considered those extraordinary officers which Christ set over the gospel-church, when it was first constituted, namely, the apostles and evangelists: (a) But, besides

(a) "The *Αποστολος* is an extraordinary ambassador of Christ. He was commissioned for extraordinary purposes. Like the generals of a victorious army, the apostles exercised, in the name of their King, authority throughout all parts of the vanquished empire, until the regular magistracy was organized and fully settled. They have no successors in this respect. The presbyter is fully competent to all ordinary administrations. In relation to such cases, the apostles themselves are no more than presbyters. 1 Pet. v. 1.

Church government is subordinate to evangelic doctrine. The power given to the apostles, was intended solely for subserviency to their preaching. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. *Teaching* is the *highest dignity* in the church, because it is the most useful and laborious service. Preaching was the principal work of the apostles. The ambition of prelates has inverted this divine order. Preaching is the meanest service



these, there are others which he has given to his churches; and these either such as are appointed to bear rule, more especially, in what respects the promoting their faith and order, who are styled Pastors and Elders; of others, who have the oversight of the secular affairs of the church, and the trust of providing for the necessities of the poor committed to them, who are called Deacons.

Concerning the former of these, to wit, Pastors and Elders, we often read of them in the New Testament: nevertheless, all are not agreed in their sentiments, as to one particular relating hereunto, namely, whether the Elders spoken of in scripture are distinct officers from Pastors; or, whether Christ has appointed two sorts of them, to wit, preaching and ruling Elders? Some think the apostle distinguishes between them, when

in the popish and episcopal churches. It is merely subservient to the government of bishops and of popes. The bishops exalt the mean above the end. Government is, with them, the principal part of religion. To be in power is more dignified than to edify.

Apostolic authority was founded upon apostolic gifts. God was the author of both, and both were subservient to teaching. None can pretend to a succession of apostolic power, without a succession of the gifts which qualified for it.

The evangelists were extraordinary ministers. As ordained presbyters, they exercised the ordinary power of the pastor. 1 Tim. iv. 14. Their principal work was teaching, and organizing churches, by apostolic direction. The ordinary ministers stood in need of this assistance. They had not, as yet, the New Testament revelation in writing. The evangelists, in part, supplied this defect. Timothy would have been, to the churches which he visited, what the epistles sent to him by Paul, are to us—a directory upon which we may depend.

Επισκοπος is a name of office. It is borrowed from the synagogue *חזן*, (*Chazan, overseer.*) Maimonides de Sanhed. Cap. 4. describes him, as “the presbyter who labours in word and doctrine.” Bishop and presbyter, or, as our translation sometimes reads, overseers and elders, are different names of the same officer. Acts xx. 17—28. Presbyter is expressive of the authority, and episcopos, of the duty, of the pastor.

The angel of the church is analogous to the *SELIH-JEBUR* of the synagogue. The *שרי צבור* was the minister whose office it was publicly to read and explain the law and the prophets. The duties of the christian minister may be known, by the names given to him in the scriptures. The names which are divinely given to men, are always expressive of some important article of their conduct and character. *Presbyter* is a term of power, and points out the ruler; *pastor* points out a public purveyor of spiritual provisions for the church; *bishop*, the spiritual inspector of the state of the congregation; *teacher*, the public instructor of the congregation; and *angel*, the messenger of God to men. All these characters unite in the minister of the gospel. By each of these names is he known in the scriptures.

Διακονία, and its parent Greek verb, are derived from the Hebrew *כָּהֵן*, to minister. *Diaconos*, is one who renders a service. It is applied, in the New Testament, to the Redeemer himself. Rom. xv. 8.—To any religious worshipper. John xii. 26.—To women useful in religious concerns. Rom. xvi. 1.—To civil rulers. Rom. xiii. 4.—To all ministers of religion, whether extraordinary as apostles, or ordinary pastors. 1 Cor. iii. 5. Acts i. 14. Col. i. 7.

Every person, public or private, male or female, who renders any service to another, is a *deacon*. But, besides this general use of the word, it is a term of office, in the church.”

M'LEOD'S EVG. CAT.

he says, *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine*, 1 Tim. v. 17. the double honour here intended seems to be not only civil respect, but maintenance, as appears from the following words, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn; and the labourer is worthy of his reward*. Now these suppose that this maintenance belongs only to such as labour in word and doctrine, and not to those other Elders, who are said to rule well; therefore there are elders that rule well, distinct from those that labour in word and doctrine.

Others, indeed, think, that the apostle, in this text speaks only of the latter sort, and then the stress of his argument is laid principally on the word *Labouring*, q. d. Let every one who preaches the gospel, and presides over the church, have that honour conferred on him that is his due; but let this be greater in proportion to the pains and diligence that he expresses for the church's edification.

Nevertheless, I cannot but think, since it is agreeable to the laws of society, and not in the least repugnant to any thing we read, in scripture, concerning the office of an Elder, that, in case of emergency, when the necessity of the church requires it, or when the work of preaching and ruling is too much for a Pastor, the church being very numerous, it is advisable that some should be chosen from among themselves to assist him in managing the affairs of government and performing some branches of his office, distinct from that of preaching, which these are not called to do, as not being qualified for it: these are helpers or assistants in government; and their office may have in it a very great expediency, as in the multitude of counsellors there is safety, and the direction and advice of those who are men of prudence and esteem in the church, will be very conducive to maintain its peace and order: but I cannot think that this office is necessary in smaller churches, in which the Pastors need not their assistance. And this leads us to speak concerning the office of a Pastor, which consists of two branches, namely, preaching the word, and administering the sacraments on the one hand; and performing the office of a ruling Elder on the other.

1st, We may consider him as qualified and called to preach the gospel. This is an honourable and important work, and has always been reckoned so, by those who have had any concern for the promoting the glory of God in the world. The apostle Paul was very thankful to Christ that he conferred this honour upon him, or, as he expresses it, that *he counted him faithful and put him into the ministry*, chap. i. 12. and elsewhere he concludes, that it is necessary, that they, who engage in this work, be sent by God; *How shall they preach except they be*

sent? Rom. x. 15. This is a necessary pre-requisite to the pastoral-office, as much as speech is necessary to an orator, or conduct to a governor: nevertheless, a person may be employed, in the work of the ministry, who is not a pastor; these may be reckoned, if they discharge the work they are called to, faithfully, a blessing to the world, and a valuable part of the church's treasure; yet considered as distinct from Pastors, they are not reckoned among its officers. This is a subject that very well deserves our consideration: but, inasmuch as we have an account elsewhere \* of the qualifications and call of ministers to preach the gospel, and the manner in which this is to be done, we pass it over, at present, and proceed,

2dly, To consider a minister, as invested in the pastoral office, and so related to a particular church. The characters by which such, who are called to it, are described, in the New Testament, besides that of a Pastor, are a Bishop or Overseer, a Presbyter or Elder, who labours in word and doctrine.

The world, it is certain, is very much divided in their sentiments about this matter, some concluding that a Bishop is not only distinct from, but superior, both in order and degree to those who are styled Presbyters or Elders; whereas, others think, that there is either no difference between them, or, at least, that it is not so great, as that they should be reckoned distinct officers in a church. The account we have, in scripture, of this matter seems to be somewhat different from what were the sentiments of the church in following ages. Sometimes we read of several Bishops in one church: thus the apostle, writing to the church at Philippi, directs his epistle to the Bishops and Deacons, Phil. i. 1. and elsewhere he seems to call the same persons Bishops and Elders, or Presbyters; for it is said, that he sent to Ephesus, *and called together the Elders of the church*, Acts xx. 17. and advises them *to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over whom the Holy Ghost had made them Overseers*, or Bishops, ver. 28. and, at another time, he charges Titus *to ordain elders*, or Presbyters, *in every city*; and then gives the character of those whom he was to ordain, bidding him take care that they were blameless, and had other qualifications, necessary for this office; and, in assigning a reason for this, he adds, *For a Bishop must be blameless*, &c. where, it is plain, the word Elder and Bishop are indifferently used by him, as respecting the same person. And the apostle Peter 1 Pet. v. 1. addresses himself to the Elders of the churches, to whom he writes, styling himself *an Elder together with them*; † and, besides this, *a witness of the sufferings of Christ*, which was his character, as an apostle. And he exhorts them to perform the office of Bishops, or Overseers, ‡ as the word, which

\* See Quest. civ. clix

† οὐ μόνος ἑαυτοῦ

‡ ἐπισκοπῆς



we render *Taking the Oversight*, signifies; from whence it is evident, that Elders and Presbyters had the character of Bishops, from the work they were to perform.

Moreover, that venerable assembly, that met at Jerusalem, to discuss an important question brought before them by Paul and Barnabas, is said to consist of the Apostles and Elders, Acts xv. 6. Now, if Bishops had been, not only distinct from, but a superior order to that of Elders, they would have been here mentioned as such, and, doubtless, have met together with them; but it seems probable that they are included in the general character of Elders. Some think, that the same persons are called Bishops, because they had the oversight of their respective churches; and Elders, because they were qualified for this work, by that age and experience which they had, for the most part arrived to; as the word Elder signifies not only one that is invested in an office,\* but one who, by reason of his age, and that wisdom that often attends it, is fitted to discharge it, 1 Tim. v. 1.

We read nothing in scripture, of Diocesan churches, or Bishops over them, how much soever this was pleaded for in many following ages; and they, who maintain this argument, generally have recourse to the writings of the Fathers, and church-historians, which, were the proofs, taken from thence, more strong and conclusive than they are, would not be sufficient to support the divine right thereof. I shall not enlarge on this particular branch of the controversy, inasmuch as it has been handled with a great deal of learning and judgment, by many others,† who refer to the writings of the Fathers of the three first centuries, to prove that churches were no larger in those times than one person could have the oversight of, and that these chose their own Bishops. Some think, indeed, that there is ground to conclude, from what we find in the writings of Ignatius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and other Fathers in these ages, that there was a superiority of Bishops to Presbyters, at least, in degree, though not in order; and that the Presbyter performed all the branches of that work, that properly belonged to Bishops, only with this difference, that it was done with their leave, or by their order, or in their absence; and there being several Elders in the same church, when a Bishop died, one of those were ready to succeed him in that office.

Some, indeed, speak of the church as Parochial, and contradistinguished from Diocesan; but, inasmuch as it does not appear, by their writings, that these Parochial churches had

\* *Legatus.*

† See *Calderwood's Altar. Damasc. Jamson's fundamentals of the hierarchy examined; Forrester's hierarchical bishop's claim, &c. and Clarkson's no evidence for diocesan churches: and his diocesan churches not yet discovered. &c.*

any other bond of union, but nearness of habitation, I cannot so readily conclude, that their church-state depended principally on this political circumstance; but rather that Christians thought it most convenient for such to enter into a church-relation, who, by reason of the nearness of their situation to each other, could better perform the duties that were incumbent on them, pursuant hereunto.

But, notwithstanding this, it appears from several things occasionally mentioned by the Fathers, that the church admitted none into its communion, but those whom they judged qualified for it, and that not only by understanding the doctrines of Christianity, but by a conversation becoming their profession thereof; and it was a considerable time that they remained in a state of probation, being admitted to attend on the prayers and instructions of the church, but ordered to withdraw before the Lord's supper was administered: these are sometimes called Hearers by Cyprian; at other times, Candidates, but most commonly Catechumens. And there were persons appointed not only to instruct them but to examine what proficiency they made in religion, in order to their being received into the church. In this state of trial they continued generally two or three years\*; such care they took that persons might not deceive themselves, and the church, by joining in communion with it, without having those qualifications that are necessary thereunto. This is very different from parochial churches, as understood and defended by many in our day. Therefore when churches were called parishes, in the three first centuries, it was only a circumstantial description thereof.

In every one of these churches there was one who was called a bishop, or overseer, with a convenient number of elders or presbyters; and it is observed, by that learned writer but now referred to, that these churches, at first, were comparatively small, and not exceeding the limits of the city, or village, in which they were situate, each of which was under the care, or oversight, of its respective pastor, or bishop.

This was the state of the church, more especially, in the three first centuries: but, if we descend a little lower to the fourth century, we shall find that the government thereof was very much altered, when it arrived to a peaceable and flourishing state; then, indeed, the bishops had the oversight of of larger diocesses, than they had before, which proceeded from the aspiring temper of particular persons†, who were

\* See Clarkson's *primitive episcopacy*, chap. 7. in which he observes, that it was decreed, by some councils, that they should continue in this state of probation, at least, two or three years; and that Augustin continued so long a Catechumen, as appears from the account that Father gives of his age, when converted to Christianity, and afterwards received into the church by Ambrose.

† See *Primitive Episcopacy*, Page 189—197

not content till they had added some neighbouring parishes to their own, and so their churches became very large, till they extended themselves over whole provinces. But even this was complained of by some, as an abuse; which occasioned Chrysostom so frequently to insist on the inconvenience of bishops having churches too large for them to take the oversight of, and not so much regarding the qualifications as the number of those over whom they presided; and he signifies his earnest desire, that those under his care might rather excel in piety, than in number, as it would be an expedient for his better discharging the work committed to him \*.

Thus concerning the character and distinction of the pastors of churches, together with the form of the church in the first ages of Christianity; and what is observed, by many, concerning the agreement and difference which there was between bishops and presbyters: but this has been so largely insisted on, by many who have written on both sides the question, and the controversy turning very much on critical remarks made on some occasional passages, taken out of the writings of the Fathers, without recourse to scripture; it is therefore less necessary, or agreeable to our present design, to enlarge on that head: however, we may observe, that some of those who have written in defence of Diocesan Episcopacy, have been forced to acknowledge, that Jerom, Augustin, Ambrose, Chrysostom, in the Fourth Century; and, in some following ages, Sedulius, Primatius, Theodoret, and Theophylact, have all held the identity of both name and order of bishops and presbyters in the primitive church †. Jerom, in particular, is more express on this subject than any of them, and proves it from some arguments taken from scripture, which speak of the distinction that there was between them, as being the result of those divisions, by which the peace and order of the church was broken, and that it was no other than an human constitution. (a) This opinion of Jerom is largely defended by a

\* See Clarkson's *Primitive Episcopacy*, chap. 8. in which he refers to several places, in the writings of that excellent Father, to the same purpose.

† See *Stillingfleet Iren.* Page 276.

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(a) "More than fourteen hundred years ago the superiority of the Prelates to Presbyters was attacked, in the most direct and open manner, as having no authority from our Lord Jesus Christ. The banner of opposition was raised not by a mean and obscure declaimer; but by a most consummate Theologian. "By one" who, in the judgment of Erasmus, was, without controversy by far the most "learned and most eloquent of all the Christians; and the prince of Christian "Divines."\*—By the illustrious Jerome.†

\* We quote the words of one who was assuredly no friend to our cause. vid. Cave, *Hist. Litt. Script: Eccles.* p. 171. Ed. 1720. Fol.

† Prosper, who was nearly his cotemporary, calls him *magister mundi*: i. e. the teacher of the world. *ib.*



learned writer \*, who shews that it is agreeable to the sentiments of other Fathers, who lived before and after him. Thus

\* *Vid. Blondel. Apol. pro Sent. Hieron.*

Thus he lays down both doctrine and fact relative to the government of the church, in his commentary on Titus i. 5.

*That thou shouldest ordain Presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee.\*—*“What sort of Presbyters ought to be ordained he shows afterwards,—*If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, &c.* and then adds, *for a bishop must be blameless as the steward of God, &c.* A Presbyter, therefore, is the same as a Bishop. and before there were, *by the instigation of the devil*, parties in religion; and it was said among different people, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas*, the churches were governed by the joint counsel of the Presbyters. But afterwards, when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world, that one, chosen from among the Presbyters, should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him, and the seeds of schisms taken away.

“Should any one think that this is my private opinion, and not the doctrine of the scriptures, let him read the words of the apostles in his epistle to the Philippians; ‘Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons,’ &c. Philippi, is a single city of Macedonia; and certainly in one city there could not be several bishops as they are now styled; but as they, at that time, called the very same persons bishops whom they called Presbyters, the Apostle has spoken without distinction of bishops as Presbyters.

“Should this matter yet appear doubtful to any one, unless it be proved by an additional testimony; it is written in the acts of the Apostles, that when Paul had come to Miletum, he sent to Ephesus and called the Presbyters of that church, and among other things said to them, ‘take heed to yourselves and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit hath made you Bishops.’ Take particular notice, that calling the PRESBYTERS of the single city of Ephesus, he afterwards names the same persons BISHOPS.” After further quotations from the epistle to the Hebrews, and from Peter, he proceeds: “Our intention in these remarks is to show that, among the ancients, *Presbyters and Bishops were THE VERY SAME*. But that BY LITTLE AND LITTLE, that the plants of dissensions might be plucked up, the whole concern was devolved upon an individual. As the Presbyters, therefore, KNOW that they are subjected, BY THE CUSTOM OF THE church, to him who is set over them; so let the Bishops know, that they are greater than Presbyters MORE BY CUSTOM, than by ANY REAL APPOINTMENT OF CHRIST.”

\* “Qui qualis Presbyter debeat ordinari, in consequentibus disserens hoc ait: Si quis est sine crimine, unius uxoris vir,” et cetera: postea int. it. “Oportet, n. Episcopum sine crimine esse, tanquam Dei dispensatorem.” Idem est ergo Presbyter, qui et Episcopus, et antequam *diaboli instinctu*, studia in religione fierent, et diceretur in populis: “Ego sum Pauli, ego Apollos, ego autem Cephe.” *communis Presbyterorum consilio* ecclesie gubernabantur. Postquam vero unusquisque eos, quos baptizaverat, suos putabat esse, non Christi: *in toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de Presbyteris electus superponeretur ceteris: ad quem omnis ecclesie cura pertineret* et schismata semina tollerentur. Putet aliquis non scripturatum, sed nostrum, esse sententiam Episcopum et Presbyterum unum esse; et aliud ætatis, aliud æge nomen officii: relegat Apostoli ad Philipponses verba dicentis: Paulus et Timotheus servi Jesu Christi, omnibus sanctis in Christo Jesu, qui sunt Philippis, cum Episcopis et Diaconis, gratia vobis et pax, et reliqua. Philippi una est urbs Macedonia; et certe in una civitate plures ut nuncupantur. Episcopi esse non poterant. Sed quia eodem Episcopo ille tempore quos et Presbyteros appellabant, propterea indifferenter de Episcopis quasi de Presbyteris sit locutus. Adhuc hoc alicui videatur ambiguum, nisi altero testimonio comprobetur. In Actibus Apostolorum scriptum est, quod cum venisset Apostolus Miletum, miserat Ephesum, et vocaverit Presbyteros ecclesie ejusdem, quibus postea inter cetera sit locutus: attendite vobis, et omni gregi in quo vos Spiritus sanctus posuit Episcopos, pascere et fectam Domini quam custoditis per sinuam eam. Et hoc diligentius observato, quo modo unus civitatis Ephesi Presbyteros vocans, postea eodem Episcopos dixerit: Hæc propterea, ut ostenderemus apud veteres eundem fuisse Presbyteros quos et Episcopos. Paulum vero, ut dissensionem plantaria evellerentur, ad unum omnem sollicitudinem esse delatam. Sicut ergo Presbyteri erant et ex ecclesia, consuetudine et qui ad propositum fuerit, esse subjectos. Ita Episcopi noverunt se magis consuetudine quam dispositionis dominica, certitate, Presbyteris esse majores. Hieronymi C. 1. in Tit. l. 1. Opp. Tom. VI. p. 164. ed. 16. torn. Paris, 1635. Fel.

concerning a pastor, as styled a *bishop* or *presbyter*; we shall now consider him as invested in his office, whereby he becomes related to a particular church of Christ. That no one is pas-

He pursues the same argument, with great point, in his famous Epistle to Evagrius, asserting and proving from the Scriptures, that in the beginning and during the Apostles' days, a Bishop and a Presbyter were the same thing. He then goes on: "As to the fact, that AFTERWARDS, one was ELECTED to preside over the rest, this was done as a remedy against schism; lest every one drawing his proselytes to himself, should rend the church of Christ. For even at Alexandria, from the Evangelist Mark to the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius, the Presbyters always chose one of their number, placed him in a superior station, and gave him the title of Bishop: in the same manner as if an army should MAKE an emperor; or the deacons should choose from among themselves, one whom they knew to be particularly active, and should call him ARCH-DEACON. For, excepting ordination, what is done by a Bishop, which may not be done by a Presbyter? Nor is it to be supposed, that the church should be one thing at Rome, and another in all the world besides. Both France and Britain, and Africa, and Persia, and the East, and India, and all the barbarous nations worship one Christ, observe one rule of truth. If you demand authority, the globe is greater than a city. Wherever a Bishop shall be found, whether at Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Tanis, he has the same pretensions, the same priesthood."

Here is an account of the origin and progress of Episcopacy, by a Father whom the Episcopalians themselves admit to have been the most able and learned man of his age; and how contradictory it is to their own account, the reader will be at no loss to perceive, when he shall have followed us through an analysis of its several parts.

1. JEROME expressly denies the superiority of Bishops to Presbyters, by *divine right*. To prove his assertion on this head, he goes directly to the scriptures; and argues, as the advocates of parity do, from the interchangeable titles of Bishop and Presbyters; from the *directions* given to them without the least intimation of difference in their authority; and from the *powers* of Presbyters, undisputed in his day.

2. JEROME states it as an *historical fact*, that, in the original constitution of the church, before the devil had as much influence as he acquired afterwards, *the churches were governed by the joint counsels of the Presbyters*.

3. JEROME states it as an *historical fact*, that this government of the churches, *by Presbyters alone*, continued until, for the avoiding of scandalous quarrels and schisms, it was thought expedient to alter it. "*Afterwards*," says he, "when every one accounted those whom he baptized as belonging to himself, and not to Christ, it was decreed throughout the whole world, that one, chosen from among the Presbyters, should be put over the rest, and that the whole care of the church should be committed to him."

4. JEROME states it as an *historical fact*, that this change in the government of the church—this creation of a superior order of ministers, took place, not at once, but *by degrees*—"Paulatim," says he, "by little and little." The precise date on which this innovation upon primitive order commenced, he does not mention; but he says positively, that it did not take place till the factious spirit of the Corinthians had spread itself in different countries, to an alarming extent. "*In populis*," is his expression. Assuredly, this was not the work of a day. It had not been ac-

\* Quod autem postea unus electus est, qui cæteris præponeretur, in schismatis remedium factum est: ne unusquisque ad se trahens Christi Ecclesiam rumperet. Nam et Alexandriæ a Marco Evangelista usque ad Heraclum & Dionysium Episcopos, presbyteri semper unum ex se electum, in excelsiori gradu collocatum: Episcopum nominabant: quo modosi exercitus imperatorem faciat; aut diaconi eligant de se, quem industrium noverint & archidiaconum vocent. Quid enim facit, excepta ordinatione, Episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat? Nec altera Romanæ urbis Ecclesia, altera totius orbis existimanda est. Et Galilææ & Britanniæ, & Africa, & Persis, & Oriens, & India, & omnes barbaræ nationes unum Christum adorant, unam observant regulam veritatis. Si auctoritas queritur, orbis major est urbe. Ubicumque fuerit Episcopus, sive Romæ, sive Eugubii, sive Constantinopoli, sive Rhegii, sive Alexandriæ, sive Tanis; ejusdem meriti, ejusdem & sacerdotii. Hieron. Opp. T. II. p. 624.

tor of the catholic church, has been observed, under a foregoing head\*, wherein we shewed, that the church, when styled catholic, is not to be reckoned the seat of government; and therefore we must consider a pastor as presiding over a particular church; and, in order hereunto, it is necessary that he should be called, or chosen, to take the oversight of it, on their part, and comply with the invitation on his own, and, after that be solemnly invested in, or set apart, to this office.

(1.) We are to consider what more especially respects the church, who have a right to choose, or call those, who are qualified for the work, to engage in this service, and to per-

\* See Page 522, ante. Some, indeed, choose to say, that persons that stand more immediately related to their respective churches, are pastors in the catholic church, though not of it; which, if the words be rightly understood, does not militate against what we assert. Ο του δι ο ποιμην εστιν ειν ως προβατα ακουοντες. Ignat. epist. ad Philad. p. 42

complished when the apostolic epistles were written, because Jerome appeals to these for proof that the churches were then governed by the joint counsels of Presbyters; and it is incredible that such ruinous dissensions, had they existed, should not have been noticed in letters to others beside the Corinthians. The disease indeed, was of a nature to spread rapidly; but still it must have time to travel. With all the zeal of Satan himself, and of a parcel of wicked or foolish clergymen to help him, it could not march from people to people, and clime to clime, but in a course of years. If Episcopacy was the apostolic cure for schism, the contagion must have smitten the nations like a flash of lightning. This would have been quite as extraordinary as an instantaneous change of government:—No: the progress of the mischief was gradual, and so, according to Jerome, was the progress of the remedy which the wisdom of the times devised.\* We agree with them, who think that the experiment introduced more evil than it banished.

5. JEROME states as *historical facts*, that the elevation of one Presbyter over the others, was a *human contrivance*; was not imposed by authority, but *crept in by custom*;—and that the Presbyters of his day, *knew* this very well. *As, therefore*, says he, the Presbyters *know that they are subjected to their superior by custom; so let the bishops know that they are above the Presbyters, rather by the custom of the church, than by the Lord's appointment.*

6. JEROME states it as an *historical fact*, that the first bishops were made by the Presbyters themselves; and consequently they could neither have, nor communicate any authority above that of Presbyters. “*Afterwards*,” says he, “to prevent schism, one was elected to preside over the rest.” Elected and commissioned by whom? By the Presbyters: for he immediately gives you a broad fact which it is impossible to explain away. “At Alexandria,” he tells you, “from the evangelist Mark to the Bishops Heraclas and Dionysius,” i.e. till about the middle of the third century, “the Presbyters always chose one of their number, placed him in a superior station, and gave him the title of Bishop.”

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\* Our opponents, who contend that nothing can be concluded from the promiscuous use of the scriptural titles of office, are yet compelled to acknowledge that *bishop* and *Presbyter* were originally separated and restricted, the former to the superior, and the latter to the inferior order of ministers. We would ask them *when* and *how* this was done? It was not necessary to distinguish these officers by *special titles* in the apostles' day, what necessity was there for such a distinction afterwards? The church might have gone on, as she began, to this very hour; and what could have been the harm? Now, there was a necessity for the distinction; and Jerome has shown the source. What one of the Presbyters was set over the heads of the others, there came a *superior*, and he wanted a name; he appropriated the term *Bishop* to him; and thus acquired the *diem of authority*, a title unknown to the scripture. The people, no doubt, were told that there was no material alteration in the scriptural order; and hearing nothing but a name to which they had always been accustomed, they were the less startled.



form the two branches of the pastoral office, namely, instructing and governing. This is not only agreeable to the laws of society, but is plainly contained in scripture, and appears to have been the sentiment and practice of the church, in the three first centuries thereof. The church's power of choosing their own officers, is sufficiently evident from scripture. If there were any exception hereunto, it must be in those instances in which there was an extraordinary hand of providence in the appointment of officers over them; but, even then, God sometimes referred the matter to their own choice: thus, when Moses made several persons rulers over Israel, to bear a part of the burden, which before was wholly laid on him, he refers this to their own election, when he says, *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you*, Deut. i. 13. And in the gospel-church, which, at first, consisted of *about an hundred and twenty members*, Acts i. 15. when an apostle was to be chosen to succeed Judas, they *appointed two* out of their number, and prayed, that God would *signify which of them he had chosen*; and, when they had *given forth their lots, the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles*, ver. 23. so we render the words: but if they had been rendered, he was numbered among the eleven apostles, by common suffrage or vote, it would have been more expressive of the sense thereof\*. Soon after this, we read of the choice of other officers, to wit, deacons in the church, chap. vi. 3. and the apostles say to them, *Look ye out among you seven men, whom ye may appoint over this business*. And afterwards, in their appointing elders, or pastors, over particular churches, we read of their choosing them by vote or suffrage: thus it is said, in Acts xiv. 23. *When they had ordained them elders in every church*; so we translate the words †; but they might be better rendered, *When they had chosen elders in every church by lifting up of the hand*. This was, and is, at this day, a common mode of electing persons, either to civil or religious offices. (a) And

\* Συγκατε-ἤρισθη μετὰ τῶν ἑδέκα ἀποστόλων, which Beza renders, Communibus calculis allectus est cum undecem Apostolis.

† Χειροτονῶντες ἀνέτες αὐτοῖς πρεσβύτερος κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, Cum ipsi per suffragia creassent per singulas ecclesias Presbyteros. The learned Dr. Owen, in his *True Nature of a Gospel-church*, &c. Page 68—71. proves that the word χειροτονῶντες, in several Greek writers, is used to signify the choice of a person to office by suffrage, or vote, which was done by lifting up the hand. And he observes, that all our old English translations render the words, in this text, ordaining or creating elders by the suffrage of the disciples. And he further observes, that the word is but once more used in the New Testament, viz. in 2 Cor. viii. 19. where it is rendered, he was chosen, &c. See more to this purpose in the place but now mentioned.

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(a) Χειροτονῶ signifies, to hold out the hand. It is compounded of Χεῖρ, the hand, and Τενεῖν, to extend. The action, holding out the hand, is expressive of

it might be easily proved from the Fathers, that this was the universal practice of the church in the three first centuries, and not wholly laid aside in following ages, till civil policy, and secular interest usurped and invaded the rights thereof: but this argument having been judiciously managed by Dr. Owen\*, I pass it over, and proceed to consider,

(2.) That a pastor being thus chosen, by the church, and having confirmed his election by his own consent; then follows his being separated, or publicly set apart to this office, with fasting and prayer, which is generally called *ordination*. This does not, indeed, constitute a person a pastor of a church, so that his election, confirmed by his consent, would not have been valid without it; yet it is not only agreeable to the scripture-rule, but highly expedient, that, as his ministerial acts are to be public, his first entering into his office should be so likewise, and, in order thereunto, that other pastors, or elders, should join in this solemnity; for, though they do not confer this office upon him, yet thereby they testify their approbation of the person chosen to it; and a foundation is laid for that

\* See the *True Nature of a Gospel church*, Page 78—83. where it appears, from Ignatius, Tertullian, Origen, and Cyprian, that this was practised in the three first centuries; and from Blondel's *Apology*, which he refers to, that it was continued in some following ages.

choice and resolution. It marks a *decision of the will*, whether intimated or executed.

The word *προχειρισμεν*, is used to signify divine appointment. Acts x. 41. *χειρισμεν*, Human choice, however expressed. 2 Cor. viii. 19. And 3dly, it signifies to elect to office, by holding up the right hand. "At Athens, some of the magistrates were called *χειρισμεις*, because they were elected by the people in this manner." Parkhurst.

The *right of choosing* spiritual rulers, is in the christian people; the *power of ordination*, in those who are already ordained. *Χειροτονισταις*, Acts xiv. 23, embraces election and consequent ordination of elders in the church.

The hand is the instrument of power. *Χεϋ* is used in scripture for ministerial action. Acts xiv. 3. Luke iv. 11.

Hence, imposition of hands is a communication of power. This significant action was known to the patriarchs. Gen. xlviii. 14.

The presbyters of the synagogue were ordained by the laying on of hands. In its scriptural usage, this action is universally expressive of some communication from him who lays on the hand, to him upon whom it is laid. In any other sense, it is a common, and not a religious action.

1. It is a mean of communicating bodily vigour. Mark vi. 5.
2. It is a communication of special blessing. Gen. xlviii. 14. Mark x. 16.
3. It is a mean of imparting the power of miracles—the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Acts viii. 17.

4. And it is a communication of ministerial authority. Numb. xxvii. 18. 23. Deut. xxxiv. 9. 1 Tim. v. 22. Physical strength, special blessing, miraculous power, and moral authority, have, according to divine appointment, been communicated by the laying on of hands. These things have also been otherwise communicated. God selects means adequate to the end.

All the communications mentioned in scripture as made by the imposition of hands, are of an extraordinary kind, except one—that of authority. This is alone capable of being regulated by ordinary agency.

harmony of pastors and churches, that tends to the glory of God, and the promoting of the common interest. This also fences against several inconveniences which might ensue; since it is possible that a church may chuse a person to be their pastor, whose call to, and qualification for this office may be questioned; and it is natural to suppose, that they would expect that their proceedings herein should be justified and defended by other pastors and churches, and the communion of churches maintained: but how can this be done if no expedient be used to render this matter public and visible, which this way of ordaining or setting apart to the pastoral office does? And they who join herein testify their approbation thereof, as what is agreeable to the rule of the gospel.

This public inauguration, or investiture in the pastoral office, is, for the most part, performed with imposition of hands, which, because it is so frequently mentioned in scripture, and appears to have been practised by the church in all succeeding ages, it will be reckoned, by many, to be no other than a fruitless attempt, if not an offending against the generation of God's people, to call in question the warrantableness thereof. It is certain, this ceremony was used in the early ages of the church, particularly in public and solemn benedictions: thus Jacob laid his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh, when he blessed them; and also in conferring political offices, Numb. xxvii. 18. Deut. xxiv. 9. It was also used in healing diseases in a miraculous way, 2 Kings v. 11. Mark vii. 32. and it was sometimes used when persons were eminently converted to the Christian faith and baptized, Acts ix. 17. These things are very evident from scripture: nevertheless, it may be observed, that, in several of these instances, it is, and has, for some ages past, been laid aside, by reason of the discontinuance of those extraordinary gifts, which were signified thereby. There was, doubtless, something extraordinary in the patriarchal benediction; as Jacob did not only pray for a blessing on the sons of Joseph, but as a prophet he foretold that the divine blessing, which he spake of, should descend on their posterity; and therefore we don't read of this ceremony's being used in the more common instances, when persons, who were not endowed with the spirit of prophecy, put up prayers or supplications to God for others. And though it was sometimes used, as in the instances before-mentioned, in the designation of persons to political offices; yet it was not in those times in which the church of the Jews was under the divine theocracy, and extraordinary gifts were expected to qualify them for the office they were called to perform.

And whereas we frequently read, in scripture of imposition of hands, in the ordination, or setting apart of ministers to the



pastoral office, while extraordinary gifts were conferred, and of these gifts being also bestowed on persons who were converted to the Christian faith, and baptized; in these, and other instances of the like nature, this ceremony was used, as a significant sign and ordinance for their faith: but it is certain, that the conferring extraordinary gifts to qualify for the pastoral office, is not now to be expected; therefore it must either be proved, that, besides this, something else was signified, which may be now expected, or else the use thereof, as a significant sign, or an ordinance for our faith, cannot be well defended. And if it be said, that the conferring this office is signified thereby, it must be proved, that they who use the sign, have a right to confer the office, or to constitute a person a pastor of a particular church. If these things cannot easily be proved, then we must suppose that the external action is used, without having in it the nature of a sign, and then it is to be included among those things that are indifferent; and a person's right to exercise the pastoral office, does not depend on the use; nor, on the other hand, is it to be called in question, by reason of the neglect thereof. But, to conclude this head, if the only thing intended hereby be what Augustin understood to be the meaning of imposition of hands, on those who were baptized in his day, namely, that it was nothing else but a praying over persons \*, I have nothing to object against it: but if more be intended hereby, and especially if it be reckoned so necessary to the pastoral office, that it cannot be acceptably performed without it; this may give just reason for many to except against it.

(3.) We shall now consider the pastor, as discharging his office. This more immediately respects the church to which he stands related, especially in what concerns that branch thereof, which consists in presiding or ruling over them. If there be more elders joined with him, with whom he is to act in concert, this is generally called a *consistory*, which I cannot think essential to the exercise of that government, which Christ has appointed; though sometimes it may be expedient, as was before observed: but whether there be one, or more, that bear rule in the church, their power is subjected to certain limitations, agreeable to the laws of society, and those in particular which Christ has given to his church. As the nature of the office we are speaking of, does not argue that the church is without any government, or under such a democracy as infers confusion, or supposes that every one has a right to give laws to the whole body; so it has not those ingredients of absolute and unlimited monarchy or aristocracy, as are inconsistent with

\* *Vid. Aug. de Bapt. contr. Donat. Lib. III cap. 6. Quid est aliud manus impositio quam oratio super hominem?*

liberty; and therefore we suppose, that a pastor, and other elders, if such be joined with him, are not to rule according to their own will, or to act separately from the church in the affairs of government, but in their name, and with their consent; and therefore they are generally styled, the instruments by which the church exerts that power which Christ has given it; and accordingly a church, when officers are set over it, is said to be organized. This is called, in scripture, the power of the keys, which, agreeably to the laws of society, is originally in them, and is to be exercised in their name, and with their consent, by their officers; and therefore a pastor, or other elders with him, have no power to act without the consent of the church, in receiving members into, or excluding them from its communion. This I cannot but think to be agreeable to the law of nature, on which the laws of society are founded, as well as the gospel-rule.

I am sensible that many of the reformed churches, who allow that this power is originally in them, conclude notwithstanding, and their practice is consonant hereunto, that it may be consigned over to the pastor and elders, and that this is actually done by them when they chuse them into that office. The principal argument, by which this is generally defended, is, that because they are fit to teach, they are fit to govern, without being directed in any thing that relates thereunto. But the question is not concerning the fitness of persons for it, which is not to be denied; but whether the church ought to divest itself of that power which Christ has given it, especially when it may be exerted without anarchy or confusion; which it certainly may, if this power be not abused, or the due exercise thereof neglected. And, in order hereunto, a church-officer is to prepare matters for the church, that nothing trifling, vain, or contentious may be brought before them; and to communicate them to it, to desire to know their sentiments about them, and to declare, improve, and act pursuant thereunto.

There are, indeed, some branches of the pastoral office, which are to be performed without the church's immediate direction; such as preaching the word, administering the sacraments, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, endeavouring to satisfy them that are under doubts, or scruples of conscience, and excite and encourage them to perform those duties, which their professed subjection to Christ, and their relation to his church, oblige them to.

(4.) We shall now consider pastors, or elders of churches, as employed occasionally in using their best endeavours to assist others in some difficulties, in which their direction is needed or desired. This is what we call a *synod*, which word

as very much disrelished by some in our age ; and it were to be wished, that there had been no occasion for this prejudice, from the account we have of the abuses practised by synods and councils in former ages. This gave great uneasiness to Gregory Nazianzen, who complains of confusions, and want of temper which were too notorious in some synods in the age in which he lived \*. And afterwards we find, that almost all the corruptions that were brought into the church, were countenanced by some synod or other ; and many of them assumed to themselves a power of making laws, which were to be received with equal obligation, as though they had been delivered by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost ; and a door was opened by them to persecution, so that they have in many instances, taken away not only the religious, but civil rights of mankind. It will therefore be thought strange that I should so much as mention the word ; but though I equally detest every thing of this nature, that has been practised by them ; yet it is not impossible to treat on this subject in an unexceptionable manner : It is certainly a warrantable practice, founded in the law of nature, for persons who cannot compromise a matter in debate, to desire the advice of others. The same is, doubtless, true in religious matters ; therefore we suppose that there may be some matters debated in a church, which cannot be issued among themselves. And in this case, provided it be an affair of importance, it is expedient for them to apply themselves to other churches, to give their advice in this matter by their pastors and elders : If it be some corruption in doctrine that has insinuated itself into it, they may desire to know the sense of others about it, still reserving to themselves a judgment of discretion, without reckoning their decrees infallible ; or if it be in matters of conduct, which, through the perverseness of some, and ignorance of others, may be of pernicious tendency, if suitable advice be not given ; then it ought to be desired and complied with, so far as it appears to be agreeable to the mind of Christ. This is therefore not only allowable, but very expedient.

I have nothing to say as to the number of persons, to whom this matter may be referred : A multitude of counsellors may sometimes be mistaken, when a smaller number have given better advice ; neither have I any thing to allege in defence of œcumenical councils, much less such as have been convened by the usurped power of the bishop of Rome. But we are speaking of a particular church under some difficulties, desiring the advice of as many as they think meet to refer the matter to : or if a Christian magistrate demands the advice of the pastors or elders of churches, in his dominions, in those religious af-

\* *Vid. Greg. Naz. Epist. 42. ad Procop.*



fairs that are subservient to his government, they ought to obey him. These things are altogether unexceptionable : But when ministers give vent to their own passions, and pretend to give a sanction to doctrines that are unscriptural ; or if they annex anathemas to their decrees, or enforce them by excommunication, or put the civil magistrate on methods of persecution ; this is going beyond the rule, and offering prejudice rather than doing service to the interest of Christ : But when they only signify what is their judgment about some important articles of faith, or church-discipline, or some intricate cases of conscience, in which it is desired ; and endeavour to give conviction rather by arguments, than barely their authority, this is not only their duty, but an advantage to the church, as the synod that met at Jerusalem was to the church at Antioch, Acts xv. 31,—33.

Thus we have considered the office of a Pastor. It might be expected that we should consider that of a Teacher, which many think to be a distinct officer in the church, as the apostle says, *He gave some pastors and teachers*, Eph. iv. 11. There are many, who treat on this matter, that suppose a teacher to be a distinct officer from a pastor ; but yet when they call him a teaching elder, and allow him to have a part of the government of the church, as well as to be employed in the work of preaching, their method of explaining the nature of this office supposes it to differ little or nothing from that of a pastor, except in name. If they say that the difference consists in that the pastor is superior in honour and degree, to a teacher, and make the latter no more than a provisional officer in the church, appointed to perform what properly belongs to the pastor, when he is absent, or indisposed, or, for any other reason, desires him to officiate for him ; I cannot see reason to conclude that this is the meaning of the word teacher, as mentioned by the apostle ; so that whilst they plead for its being a distinct office in the church, and, at the same time, explain it in such a way, there seems to be little else but a distinction without a difference.

As for the opinion of those who think that it was, indeed, a distinct office, but that a teacher was called, by the church, to some other branches of teaching, which the pastor could not well attend to, and that these were such as were styled, by the primitive church, Catechists ; this deserves our consideration. We read, in the early ages of the church, of persons who had this office and character : Their work was such as needed those gifts, which our blessed Saviour was pleased to bestow on men, for the propagating his interest in the world, as much as any other ; for, whether they preached publicly or no, as the pastor was called to do, their business was not only to instruct the catechumens, who were disposed to embrace the Christian

doctrine, but all who were willing to be taught by them ; for which end there were public schools erected, which were under the direction, care, and countenance of the church, in which the method of instruction was, by explaining the scriptures, and, in public and set disputations, defending the Christian religion against those who opposed it, by which means many were converted to the Christian faith from among the heathen ; and others, who were initiated therein, were, by this means, as well as by public preaching, established and confirmed therein, and thereby qualified for church-communion, and then baptized and joined to the church. Thus we read, in the writings of the Fathers, and church-historians, of several who performed this office with very great reputation and usefulness \* ; and it is thought, by some, to have been not only agreeable to the practice of the church in the apostle's days, but derived from it ; and though it be not so plainly mentioned in scripture, as some other officers are, yet that the apostle refers to it, when he says, *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth*, Gal vi. 6. that is, *Let him that is catechized communicate to the catechist* †. But this is, at best, but a probable sense of the word, and therefore not sufficient of itself to give ground to conclude, that the apostle intends this when he speaks of teachers, as distinct officers from pastors. However, though, doubtless, the practice of the church, as above-mentioned, in appointing such officers was commendable ; yet it does not fully appear, that this is what the apostle intends, though I will not deny it to be a probable conjecture ; and I should acquiesce in it, rather than in any other sense of the text that I have hitherto met with, did I not think that the words pastors and teachers might not be as well, if not better, understood, as signifying one and the same office ; and therefore I had rather understand them as Jerom and Augustin do ‡, *q. d. He gave some pastors, to wit, teachers, or pastors that are teachers, or engaged in preaching the gospel, which is the principal branch of their office.* And that which

\* Near the latter end of the second century, Pantanus was a celebrated catechist, in the school supported by the church at Alexandria ; and Clemens Alexandrinus was his first scholar, and afterwards succeeded him in the work of a teacher ; and Origen was Clement's scholar, and was afterwards employed in the same work in that school. And, in the fourth century, Athanasius, who strenuously defended the faith, in the council of Nice, against Arius, had his education in the same school ; and Didymus, who flourished about the middle of that century, was a catechist therein, and Jeron and Rufinus were his scholars.

† So the vulgar Latin translation renders the word Κατηχητής, *Ei qui se catechizat.*

‡ Vid. Hieron. in Ephes. iv. 11. *Non aut alios pastores, and alios magistros ; sed alios pastores, et Magistros, ut qui pastor est, esse debeat & magister ; nec in ecclesiæ pastoris sibi nomen assumere, nisi posset docere quos parat.* 2<sup>a</sup> Aug. epist. 59. *pastores & doctores eodem puto esse, ut non alios pastores alios doctores intelligamus, sed ideo cum prædicaasset pastores subjunxisset doctores ut intelligerent pastores ad officium suum pertinere doctrinam.*

gives me farther ground to understand the words in this sense, is, because the apostle, when he enumerates the officers of a church elsewhere, speaks of teachers without any mention of pastors, as it is said, *God has set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. where no mention is made of pastors, as being included in the word teachers; and this is agreeable to what we observed elsewhere,\* which is all we shall add on this head.

The next officer in a church is a deacon, whose work and business is described as *serving tables*, Acts vi. 2. that is, the Lord's table, by providing what is necessary for the Lord's supper, and assisting in the distribution of the elements. He is also to supply the poor with necessities, and to take care that the minister may be maintained, and other expenses defrayed; and, in order hereunto, he is to receive the contributions raised by the church for those ends; so that the office is properly secular, though necessary and useful, as subservient to others that are of a spiritual nature. The apostle gives an account of the qualifications of those who are to engage in this office, in 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. in which he speaks of them as persons of an unblemished character, of great gravity and sobriety, and other endowments, which may render them faithful in the discharge of their trust, and exemplary and useful in their station.

In the first age of the church, after the apostles' days, when it was under persecution, it was the deacon's work to visit and give necessary relief to the martyrs and confessors: but we do not find that they performed any other branches of service besides this, and those above mentioned; though Tertullian speaks of them, in his time, as being permitted to baptize in the absence of bishops and presbyters,† in which they went beyond the scripture-rule, and, after this, they preached; and this practice has been defended by all who plead for diocesan episcopacy unto this day. But the arguments they bring for it, from scripture, are not sufficiently conclusive, when they say, that Stephen and Philip, who were the first deacons, preached; for this they did as evangelists, not as deacons. These indeed, as it is said of the bishop, in 1 Tim. iii. 2. ought to be *apt to teach*: thus they are described, ver. 9. as *holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience*; yet this extends no farther than that they should be fit to edify those, by their instructions, whom they relieved, by giving them a part of the church's contributions, that, by their conversation, they may do good to their souls, as well as, by what they give them, to their bodies.

\* The particle *καὶ* seems to be exegetical, and ought to be rendered even. See the note in Vol. I, page 318. The words are, *οὕτως ἵνα ποιῶντας καὶ διδασκῶντας*.

† Vid, Tertull. de bapt. baptizandi habet jus episcopus, doctrine presbyteri & diaconi.



And when it is farther said, that *they who have used the office a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith*, ver. 13. this does not sufficiently prove, as many ancient and modern writers suppose, that this qualifies them for the office of presbyters, since there is no affinity between these two offices; and one cannot, properly speaking, be a qualification for the other: but the good degree is, probably, to be understood of their having great honour in the church, as persons eminently useful to it; and great boldness in the faith, is not boldness in preaching the gospel, but resolution and stedfastness in adhering to the faith, and, in their proper station, defending, and being ready, when called to it, to suffer for it. Thus we have considered the government of the church, and the officers which Christ has appointed in it. (a)

(a) CHRIST has not lodged church-power in the hands of *diocesan bishops*, that bear rule over preaching presbyters. (1.) The scriptures expressly forbid all *lordly* dominion in the church, 3 John 9. 1 Pet. v. 3. Luke xxii. 25, 26. Matt. xx. 25, 26. Not *tyrannical*, but *lordly* dominion, however mild, is here prohibited. The Greek word expressing it is used by the SEVENTY in Gen. i. 28. Psalm lxxii. 8. ex. 2. to express dominion, which none dare pretend to be *tyrannical*.—How absurd to imagine, that the mother of James and John asked a *tyrannical* power for her sons from Christ! Or that he, who acknowledged Cæsar's authority, Matt. xxii. 21. would represent all heathen rulers as *tyrants*? (2.) Bishops and Presbyters are represented as the very same officers in scripture. Several *bishops* or *overseers* were at Ephesus, all of whom are called *elders* or *presbyters*, Acts xx. 17, 28. Several bishops governed the church in Philippi, no great city, having no inferior officers but deacons, Phil. i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 3. The reason why *elders* or *presbyters* must be of good report is, that *bishops* must be blameless; which marks them the same, Tit. i. 5, 6. Elders must feed God's flock *EPISCOPOUNTES, acting the part of bishops over them*, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Judas had a *bishopric*, Acts i. 20. Peter and John, not inferior apostles, were *presbyters*, 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 John i. (3.) The power of *ordaining pastors*, which diocesans claim for their distinguishing prerogative, is, by the scripture, placed in no standing church-officer, but in the presbytery, or *meeting of elders*. Nay, where elders were ordained, even the apostles did not by themselves ordain pastors, but concurred as members of the presbytery, 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

To anticipate objections, it must be observed, (1.) That the TWELVE and the SEVENTY disciples whom Christ, before his death, appointed to preach the gospel, had all of them *equal* power and authority, and but a *temporary* commission, Matt. x. Luke x. 1—21. (2.) The apostleship for life bestowed on several after his resurrection, was an extraordinary office, in which they had no successors. (3.) That neither Timothy nor Titus were fixed diocesans, but *itinerant* evangelists, who either travelled with the apostles, or were sent by them to supply their place, 1 Thess. i. 1. 2 Thess. i. 1. Rom. xvi. 21. Heb. xiii. 23. Col. i. 1. Phil. ii. 19. 2 Cor. i. 1. 1 Cor. iv. 17. xvi. 10. 2 Cor. i. 19. iii. 2. 1 Tim. i. 3. 2 Tim. iv. 9, 10. 12. Gal. ii. 3. 2 Cor. ii. 13. vii. 6, 7. viii. 16, 23. xii. 18. Tit. iii. 12. (4.) That the *angels* of the Asian churches were not diocesan bishops, but their pastors in general: and hence one angel is sometimes addressed as *several* persons, Rev. ii. 10, 24. (5.) That for the first three hundred years of the Christian church, such as moderated in their courts, or were more aged, or had more noted congregations, were often called *bishops*: and, in the last case, had other ordained preachers to assist them, and to officiate in case of their imprisonment or death. But we have no decisive proof of any diocesan lords. Nor do any, except the principal pastors of Rome, seem to have struggled hard for such a pre-eminence. (6.) That no Protestant church, except in England and Ireland, is governed by

6. The last thing to be considered, is the privileges of the visible church, particularly as the members thereof are said to be under God's special care and government, and, as the con-

diocesan bishops, properly so called, though indeed the almost nominal ones of Sweden and Denmark would gladly be such. (7.) That almost all the noted primitive doctors of the Christian church grant that diocesan Episcopacy has no foundation in scripture. (8.) Scarcely one argument hath ever been produced for the support of diocesan Episcopacy, but hath been effectually overturned by some other learned prelatist; nor indeed can they combat the Popish government without destroying their own. (9.) Diocesan bishops, as such, have never been any honour to the church, or centre of unity: but have often been introducers and supporters of Popish abominations.

If Christ has not lodged church-power in the *community of the faithful*, or in *magistrates*, or in *diocesan bishops*, he must have placed it in *officers of his own appointment*, Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 18—20. 2 Cor. x. 8. Heb. xiii. 7. 17. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12.—Some of these were **EXTRAORDINARY**, appointed for the first erection of the gospel-church. (1.) **APOSTLES**, who had an immediate commission from Christ equally extended to all nations, as occasions offered,—were privileged with an infallibility in their doctrine;—had a constant power of working miracles as directed by God, and of speaking languages which they had never learned;—had power to confer the miraculous influences of the Holy Ghost on others, and of sending forth evangelists, or by themselves ordaining presbyters and deacons, Mark xvi. 15—20. Acts i.—xxi. (2.) **EVANGELISTS**, who assisted the apostles in planting or watering churches, and, by their direction, ordained presbyters and deacons, and erected judicatories in infant churches. (3.) **PROPHETS**, who explained dark passages of scripture, and sometimes foretold future events, 1 Cor. xiv. 29—32. Acts xi. 28. xxi. 10, 11.

Others of these officers were **ORDINARY**, which are divided into **BISHOPS**, **OVERSEERS** OF **ELDERS**, and **DEACONS**. Bishops or elders are subdivided into *pastors*, or *elders that labour in word and doctrine*, and *elders that only rule well*. Their name **BISHOP** or **OVERSEER** marks their authority over and inspection of others. **PRESBYTER** or **ELDER** denotes their gravity, prudence, and experience, and their being but subordinate rulers under Christ to declare and execute his laws. Thus we have three distinct kinds of church-officers, **PASTORS**, **RULING ELDERS**, and **DEACONS**. The office of the first includes the power of the two latter; and that of the second the power of the last, but not the distinguishing power of the first; and the office of deacons includes no power peculiar to either of the two preceding offices.

1. The *pastoral office* is a spiritual relation to the Christian church, empowering men to preach the gospel, dispense the sacraments, and concur in acts of governing church-members. Its divine institution is evident. (1.) God furnishes and appoints *pastors*, *teachers*, *bishops* or *overseers*, in the church, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Acts xx. 28. Rom. xii. 6—8. (2.) The qualifications of such officers are *divinely* prescribed, 1 Tim. iii. 1—8. v. 21, 22. Tit. i. 5—9. (3.) Such characters are, by the Holy Ghost, ascribed to them, as import authority and call to their word, as *pastors*, *teachers*, *rulers*, *stewards*, *preachers*, *heralds*, *ambassadors*, *bishops*, Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Luke xii. 42. Rom. x. 15. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Rev. i. 20. 1 Thess. v. 12. Col. i. 7. Eph. vi. 21. Matt. ix. 38. (4.) The manner of their entrance on their office, by the call of the church and ordination of the presbytery, is divinely prescribed, Acts i. 15—26. xiv. 23. 1 Tim. iv. 14. (5.) The work which belongs to this office is divinely prescribed, 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14—16. Acts vi. 2, 4. 2 Tim. iv. 2. ii. 25, 26. 2 Cor. xii. 15. 1 Cor. 9, 16, 17. Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 4. Heb. xiii. 17. Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 23—26. 2 Tim. ii. 2. Cor. v. 4, 13. Tit. iii. 10. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. (6.) People's behaviour towards ministers is prescribed by God, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 1 Tim. v. 17. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 7—19. 2 Thess. iii. 1. (7.) God has promised them encouragement in, and a reward of their work, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 5,

sequence hereof, have safe protection and preservation, whatever opposition they may meet with from their enemies; and they also enjoy communion of saints, and the ordinary means of salvation.

6. Rev. ii. 1. Matt. xxviii. 20. xvi. 19. John xx. 23. Matt. x. 40—42. Luke x. 16. John xiii. 20. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

The office of the gospel-ministry is *PERPETUAL*, continuing till the end of the world. (1.) God has provided nothing to supply its place: Nor can any bestowal of the Holy Ghost exclude it, any more than it did, in the apostolic age, Acts i.—xxi; xxvi. 17, 18. Heb. xi. 40. (2.) The necessity of it is *perpetual*. Men are in every age ignorant and corrupt; Satan active; heresy and error raging, or ready to spring up; gospel-mysteries much unknown; the conversion of sinners, edification of saints, and silencing of gainsayers, still necessary, 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Tim. iii. 1—7. 2 Thess. ii. 3—12. Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Eph. iv. 12—15. Tit. i. 11. (3.) The removal of the gospel-ministry is represented as a heavy judgment, which it could not be, any more than the abolishing the Jewish ceremonies, unless the perpetual continuance of it were necessary, Rev. ii. 5. (4.) God has wonderfully preserved a gospel-ministry amidst all the destructive rage and persecution of heathens and antichristians, Rev. vi; xi; xii; xiv. (5.) The divine ordinances, which are connected with a gospel-ministry, are appointed to continue till the end of the world, Eph. iv. 11—13. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 26. 1 Tim. vi. 14.

It is requisite to a man's being a minister of the gospel, that he be divinely qualified with, (1.) *Proper abilities* rendering him apt to teach; which includes rational and experimental knowledge of divine truths, and being able to explain and inculcate them in a manner calculated to enlighten the minds, impress the consciences, and excite the affections of his hearers, Eph. iv. 7—11. 1 Cor. ix. 7. iii. 8. vi. 19, 20. 1 Tim. iii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 8. Col. iv. 3, 4. 1 Cor. iv. 19. ii. 2, 4, 6, 7, 13. 2 Cor. ii. 14. v. 11. iv. 2, 5. 2 Tim. ii. 15. Isa. i. 4. xlix. 1, 2. lviii. 1. Mic. iii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Acts xxiv. 25. (2.) A blameless, holy, and edifying conversation, 1 Tim. iii. 1—8. 2 Tim. ii. 2, 21, 22. Tit. i. 5—9. (3.) Distinguished zeal for advancing the glory of God in Christ, and tender compassion to the souls of men, Rev. iii. 19. Psalm lxix. 9. cxix. 139. Gal. iv. 18, 19. 2 Cor. xii. 14, 15. 1 Thess. ii. 8. 1 Pet. v. 2. Jude 22.

All heads of families, teachers of youth, and even neighbours, ought, in a private manner, to instruct those under their charge in the truths of the gospel; but none, without being *regularly called* to it, however well qualified, ought to exercise any part of the ministerial office. (1.) The scripture plainly distinguishes between *gifts* for, and a *mission* to that office, John xx. 21, 23. Isa. vi. 6, 7, 9. (2.) It most expressly declares a call absolutely necessary to render one a public teacher, Rom. x. 15. Heb. v. 4, 6. Jer. xxiii. 21, 32. (3.) The character of *preachers, heralds, ambassadors, stewards, watchmen, angels, messengers, &c.* necessarily import a divine call, 1 Cor. ix. 17. 2 Cor. v. 20. 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2. Heb. xiii. 17. Rev. i. 20. (4.) Rules prescribed for the qualifications, election, and ordination of gospel-ministers are declared binding until the second coming of Christ, 1 Tim. iii. 1—8. v. 21, 22. vi. 13. (5.) God severely punished Korah, Saul, Uzza, Uzziah, and the sons of Sceva, for their intermeddling with the work of the sacred office, Num. xvi. 9—11, 32—38, 40. 1 Sam. xiii. 8, —14. 1 Chron. xiii. 9, 10. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—18. Acts xix. 13—16. (6.) To rush into the ministerial office, without a proper call, is inconsistent with a proper impression of the awful nature of the work, 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 17—21. xxxiii. 1—20. Rom. i. 1. Gal. i. 15, 16. John iii. 27, 28. Heb. xiii. 17. v. 4, 5. and introduces wild disorder and error, Gal. ii. 5. (7.) Christ's manifold connexion with this office,—in his being the author of it, Eph. iv. 11, 12. his suspending much of the order and edification of his church on it, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 1—3. his including such power and authority in it, Matt. xvi. 19. xviii. 18. his committing such an important trust to ministers, Col. iv. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 20. his enjoining his people to honour and obey them, 1 Tim. v. 17.



(1.) We shall consider the church, as under the care of Christ. This is the result of his propriety in them, and his having undertaken to do all things for them, as Mediator,

Heb. xiii. 7, 17. and his promising present assistance in, and future gracious rewards to their faithful discharge of their work,—manifest the necessity of a divine and regular call to it, Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Pet. v. 4.

The call of an ordinary pastor to his work ought to be *two-fold*. (1.) A *divine call*, which consists in God's inwardly inclining his heart to it in an humble manner, and by regular means; and which is often attended by a train of providences shutting him up to it, exclusive of any other. (2.) An *ecclesiastical call*, which consists in the election of the Christian people to whom he is to minister, and the ordination of the presbytery. That adult Christians have a right from Christ to choose their own pastors, is evident: (1.) The church being a voluntary society, none imposed upon her members by men, can be related to them as their pastor. (2.) None can so well judge what gifts are best suited to their spiritual edification as Christians themselves. (3.) If men may choose their servants or physicians, why hinder Christians from choosing the servants and subordinate physicians of their souls? (4.) The scripture allows the election of pastors in ordinary cases to adult Christians, and to none else, Acts i. 15—26. vi. 1—6. xiv. 23. (5.) Christ requires his people to *try* the spirits, which supposes their ability to do so, and their power to choose such only as they find most proper to edify their souls, and to refuse others, 1 John iv. 1. (6.) The introduction of ministers into their office by *Patronage*, of whatever form, has its origin from *Papery*; tends to establish a tyranny over men's consciences, whom Christ has made free; —to fill pulpits with naughty, impious, and indolent clergymen;—encourages simony, sacrilege, and perjury;—and effectually gives Christ the lie, modelling his kingdom after the form of those of this world, Ezek. xxxiv. 2—4. Isa. lvi. 9—12. John xviii. 36.—The ordination of candidates chosen for the ministerial office is not the work of the people, but of the presbytery, 1 Tim. i. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. ii. 2. Acts xiii. 1—3. xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 21, 22.

The work of pastors, when ordained, is, (1.) With much inward compassion and zeal for the welfare of their hearers' souls, to feed them with the truths of Christ, according to their different necessities, both publicly and privately, whether in the form of sermons, lectures, catechising, or exhortation, when sick, &c. 1 Pet. v. 3. 2 Cor. v. 11. 1 Cor. ix. 16. Phil. i. 17, 24, 25. 1 Tim. vi. 20. iii. 15. iv. 15, 16. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Gal. vi. 6. Heb. v. 11, 13. 1 Cor. iii. 1. Acts xx. 20, 21, 27, 28, 31, 35. xxvi. 17, 18. Ezek. xxxiv. 1—16. iii. 17—21. xxxiii. 1—20. Col. i. 28, 29. Isa. xl. 11. l. 4. 1 Thess. ii. 2—12. v. 12. James v. 14. 2 Cor. xi. 28, 29. (2.) To administer the sacraments, in a proper manner, to proper persons, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. vii. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 23—29. (3.) To rule over their people with impartiality, zeal, meekness, and prudence, censuring offenders, and absolving penitents, Heb. xiii. 17. 1 Tim. v. 20, 21. i. 20. Tit. iii. 10, 11. Rev. ii. 2, 14, 20. 1 Cor. v. 4, 5. 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7. (4.) To care and provide for the poor, Gal. ii. 9, 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. 2 Cor. viii; ix. (5.) To give themselves habitually to *effectual fervent prayer* for the church of Christ in general, and especially for those of their particular charge, Acts vi. 2, 4. Eph. iii. 14—19. i. 15—20. Gal. iv. 19. Col. iv. 12. (6.) To exemplify their doctrines and exhortations, in an eminently meek, humble, holy, and edifying conversation, 1 Thess. i. 10. 1 Tim. iv. 7, 8, 12, 16. vi. 11, 12. 2 Tim. ii. 1, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23. iii. 14. Tit. i. 7—9. ii. 7, 8. Matt. v. 16—48.

II. It is plain from scripture-declarations, that Christ has appointed *rulers* in his church that are *not appointed to preach* the gospel, Rom. xii. 7, 8. Heb. xiii. 7, 17. Different gifts qualify men for teaching and for ruling, Eph. iv. 7. Such rulers are necessary for the assistance of pastors, Gal. ii. 9, 10. Acts vi. 2—4. Exod. xviii. 17—23.—The complete form of every Christian congregation requires several elders, Acts xx. 17—38. xiv. 23. Christian churches have courts similar to those Jewish ones, which had the power of excommunication; and which consisted of *elders* ruling as representatives of the congregation, Matt.

that are necessary to their salvation. This care, extended towards them, is called special, and so differs from, and contains in it many privileges, distinct from, and superior to that

xviii. 15—17. Num. xxv. 24. Deut. xix. 12. Josh. xx. 4, 6. Exod. xii. 3, 21. by comparing of which texts we find that *congregation* denotes *rulers* of it. The *SEVENTY* use the very word *ECCLERIA* which is translated *church* in Matt. xviii. 17.—But the divine appointment of *ruling elders* is still more evident, (1.) From Rom. xii. 5—8. where we find in the *one body* of the gospel-church *PROPHECY*, which includes *teaching* and *exhortation*, which may correspond with teachers and pastors, Eph. iv. 11. and *MINISTRY*, answerable to the deacon that *gives out* the church's charity, and *shows mercy* in visiting the sick and imprisoned,—and to the elder that *rules* with diligence. Here *different gifts*, given to profit withal, infer different offices, Eph. iv. 7—11. 1 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Here is one that *rules*, characterized by different gifts and different work. (2.) From 1 Cor. xii. 28. where we find *GOVERNMENTS*, that is, *governors*, even as *MIRACLES* denote *workers of miracles*,—set by God in the Christian church. While they are represented as different from *HELPS* or deacons, Acts vi. 1—6. their designation of *governments* marks that their office is chiefly, if not solely, executed in *ruled*. It much more properly denotes them *rulers* of church-members, than mere managers of church-money.—It is further observable, that God has set *SOME*, not *ALL*, *governments* or *governors* in the church. (3.) From 1 Tim. v. 17. where *some elders* are represented as worthy of double honour, though they do no more than *rule well*, while others are represented as more worthy of double honour, because they not only *rule well*, but also *labour in word and doctrine*.—All which elders belong to the church, Comp. chap. i. 19. iv. 14. iii. 15.—*KOPIOTES*, *labouring*, doth not denote uncommon diligence; but the common duty of all gospel-ministers, 1 Cor. iii. 8. 1 Thess. v. 12. John iv. 38.—*MAISTIA*, *especially*,—always in the New Testament distinguishes persons or things of the same general class, one from another, Acts xx. 38. xxiii. 26. xxvi. 3. Gal. vi. 10. Phil. iv. 22. 1 Tim. iv. 10. v. 8. 2 Tim. iv. 13. Tit. i. 10. Philem. 16. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Not only do most of the chief Fathers in the Christian church declare for *ruling elders*; but even Papists and Episcopalians, who inveigh against them, have a shadow of them, in their chancellors, officials, commissaries, wardens; and bishops having *no care of souls*, are *lay elders*, properly so called.—Independents also manage most of their congregational affairs by a few of their number.

The necessary qualifications of *ruling elders* are, (1.) True piety, 1 Tim. iv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 21, 22. (2.) Capacity for judging causes, 1 Chron. xii. 32. Deut. i. 13. 1 Kings iii. 5—15. Isa. xi. 2—5. Num. xi. 16, 17. (3.) Wisdom, prudence, and uprightness of conduct, connected with a good report from others, 1 Tim. iii. 1—8. Psalm ci. 2—8.—Their ordination ought to be transacted in much the same manner as that of *teaching elders* or pastors.—Their duty in general is to *rule well*; particularly, (1.) In judging the agreeableness of doctrines to the word of God,—judicially declaring what seems good to the Holy Ghost and to them, in controverted points of principle or practice, Acts xv. 28, 29. xvi. 4. Rev. ii. 2. Acts xx. 17—31. (2.) In admitting persons to church-fellowship on proper qualifications, Matt. xvi. 19. (3.) In directing or encouraging church-members to observe Christ's laws, for the honour of God and their own mutual edification, Heb. xiii. 7, 17. (4.) In taking care, that all the ordinances of the gospel be duly preserved in their purity and perfection, Song i. 7, 8. (5.) In carefully watching over the moral behaviour of church-members,—instructing, admonishing, exhorting, comforting, or rebuking them, as they find cause, Heb. xiii. 17. (6.) In visiting the sick in body, or distressed in mind, Jam. v. 14. (7.) In making provision for the poor, or other expenses necessary for promoting the *spiritual welfare* of the congregation, Acts xi. 27—30. (8.) In judging the case of offenders and penitents, in order to censure the former, and absolve the latter, Matt. xviii. 15—17. xvi. 19. (9.) In regulating diet of fasting, thanksgiving, the Lord's supper, &c. 1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40.

which is expressed in the methods of his common providence in the world. There are several metaphorical expressions used, in scripture, to denote Christ's care of, and the particular relation he stands in to his church: thus he is described as their Shepherd, performing those things for them that such a relation imports, Psal. xxiii. 1, 2. and lxxx. 1. Isa. xl. 11. Jer. xxxi. 10. namely, his giving them, in a spiritual sense, rest and safety, gathering, leading, and defending them; and as such he does more for his people, than the shepherd, who, being faithful to his trust, hazards his life; for Christ is expressly said to *give his life for his sheep*, John x. 11.

Moreover, his care of his church is set forth, by his standing in the relation of a *Father* to them; which argues his tender and compassionate concern for their welfare, as well as safety, Deut. xxxii. 7. Psal. ciii. 13. Isa. lxiii. 16. Jer. xxxi. 9. Now the care of Christ, extended to his Church, consists,

1st, In his separating them from, and, as it were, gathering them out of the world, or that part of it that *lieth in wickedness*, as the apostle says, *The whole world lieth in wickedness*, 1 John v. 19. or, as the word may be rendered, in the wicked one; upon which account it is called, Satan's kingdom. He gives them restraining grace, brings them under conviction of sin, and humbles them for it; and, by the preaching of the gospel, not only informs them of the way of salvation, but brings them into it.

2dly, By raising up, and spiriting some amongst them for extraordinary service and usefulness in their station, adorning them with those graces, whereby their conversation is exemplary, and they made to shine as lights in the world; and not only in some particular instances, but by a constant succession, filling up the places of those who are removed to a better world, with others, who are added to the church daily, of such as shall be saved.

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III. The divine appointment of DEACONS in the Christian church, is beyond dispute, Acts vi. 1—6. 1 Tim. iii. 8—11. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Phil. i. 1.—They ought to be men of *honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and, of wisdom*, 1 Tim. iii. 8—10. Acts vi. 3.—Their election and ordination ought not, in its manner, to differ from that of elders, Acts vi. 1—6.—Their work is to manage the temporal affairs of the congregation relative to the table of the poor, the table of ministers, and the table of the Lord, Acts vi. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 28. No other work is annexed to their office in scripture. Hence though some of the first *seven deacons*, becoming evangelists, might preach and administer sacraments, yet none, *as deacons*, have any right to do so.

There is no hint in scripture, that the offices of RULING ELDER and DEACON were designed to be *temporary*. Both of them were appointed on moral grounds and necessities respecting every church and period. The rules concerning them both are to be observed till the end of the world, 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. No congregation can therefore answer to Jesus Christ, for *dropping* of deacons, any more than for the *dropping* of ruling elders.



3dly, His care is farther extended, by fatherly correction, to prevent their ruin and apostacy, which, as the apostle says, is an instance of his *love* to them Heb. xii. 6, 7. and also of his keeping them from, and *in the hour of temptation*, Rev. iii. 10. and *bruising Satan under their feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. and in supporting them under, and fortifying them against the many difficulties, reproaches, and persecutions, they are exposed to in this world, as Moses says, in the blessing of Asher, *As thy days, so shall thy strength be; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms*, Deut. xxxiii. 25, 27.

(2.) The visible church is under Christ's special government. It is a part of his glory, as Mediator, that he is the supreme Head and Lord thereof; and this cannot but redound to the advantage of his subjects, as these we are speaking of are said to be, who profess subjection to him, which is not only their duty, but their peculiar glory, as they are thereby distinguished from the world, and entitled to his special regard. He is their King; and accordingly,

1st, He gives them laws, by which they are visibly governed, so that they are not destitute of a rule of government, any more than of a rule of faith, whereby their peace, order, edification, and salvation, are promoted, and all the advantages, which they receive from the wisdom and conduct of pastors, or other officers, whom he has appointed to go in and out before them, *to feed them with knowledge and understanding*, Jer. iii. 15. *to watch for their souls*, Heb. xiii. 17. are all Christ's gifts, and therefore privileges which the church enjoys, as under his government.

2dly, He protects and preserves them, notwithstanding the opposition of all their enemies; so that whatever attempts have been hitherto made to extirpate or ruin them, have been ineffectual. The church has weathered many a tempest, and had safety, as well as various marks of the divine honour and favour, under all the persecutions, which it has been exposed to; so that, according to our Saviour's prediction, *The gates of hell have not prevailed against it*, Matt. xvi. 18. and all these afflictive dispensations of providence are over-ruled for the promoting his own glory, and their spiritual advantage.

(3.) Another privilege, which the church enjoys, is communion of saints. Communion is the consequence of union, and therefore since they are united together as visible saints, they enjoy that communion, which is the result thereof. The apostle speaks of a two-fold fellowship which the church enjoys, their attaining whereof he reckoned the great end and design of his ministry, when he says, *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son*

*Jesus Christ*, 1 John i. 3. The former of these is included in church communion; the latter is an honour which God is pleased sometimes to confer on those who are brought into this relation: It is what all are to hope for, though none but they, who are Christ's subjects by faith, are made partakers of it. However, the communion of saints is, in itself, a great privilege, inasmuch as that a common profession, which they make of subjection to Christ, and the hope of the gospel, which they are favoured with, is a strong motive and inducement to holiness.

And it is not the smallest part of the advantage, which arises from hence, that they are interested in the prayers of all the faithful that are daily put up to God for those blessings on all his churches which may tend to their edification and salvation.

And as to what concerns the members of particular churches, who have communion with one another; there is a great advantage arising from mutual conversation about divine things, and the endeavour, which they are obliged to use *to build up themselves in their holy faith*, Jude ver. 20. and *to consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of themselves together, but exhorting one another*, Heb. x. 24, 25. and also the obligations they are under to *bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ*, Gal. vi. 2. and to express that sympathy and compassion to each other, under the various afflictions and trials which they are exposed to.

And to this we may add another privilege which they are made partakers of, in that they have communion with one another in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, in which they hope for and enjoy communion with him, whose death is shewed forth therein, and the benefits thereof applied to them that believe.

(4.) The church is farther said to enjoy the ordinary means of salvation, and the offers of grace to all the members thereof in the ministry of the gospel, by which we are to understand the word preached, and prayer. These are called the ordinary means of salvation, as distinguished from the powerful influences of the Spirit, which are the internal and efficacious means of grace, producing such effects, as infer the right which such have to eternal life. These ordinary means of grace the church is said to partake of. It is for their sake that the gospel is continued to be preached, and a public testimony to the truth thereof is given by them to the world; and, in the preaching thereof, Christ is offered to sinners, and, pursuant thereunto, grace given, whereby the church is increased, and built up by those who are taken out of the world, as God makes these ordinances effectual to answer that end. The duty of waiting on him therein is ours, the success thereof is intirely owing to the di-

vine blessing attending it. These are the privileges that the visible church enjoys.

We might have proceeded to consider those which the members of the invisible church are made partakers of, namely, union and communion with Christ in grace and glory; but these are particularly insisted on in some following answers.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.















JUN 8 - 1957



